

Raising Spirits, Making Gold and Swapping Wives:
The True Adventures of Dr John Dee and Sir Edward Kelly

Raising Spirits, Making Gold and Swapping Wives:
The True Adventures of Dr John Dee and Sir Edward Kelly

Michael Wilding

Published by Shoestring Press
19 Devonshire Avenue, Beeston, Nottingham, NG9 1BS
0115 925 1827
www.shoestringpress.co.uk
First published 1999
© Copyright: Michael Wilding 1999
The moral right of the author has been asserted.

ISBN: 1 899579 31 5

Crown copyright material in the Public Record Office is reproduced by permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office: State Papers SP 80/1 ff 133; SP 81/6 ff 7-8; SP 81/7, ff 28, 31, 140, 143-4; SP 82/3 f 134; SP 84/42 f 68.

Contents

One: Talbot.....	1
Two: Kelly.....	26
Three: Scroll, Book and Powder	47
Four: Laski, Madini and Other Visitors	85
Five: Oxford and Away.....	Ill
Six: Poland	140
Seven: Go the the Emperor	175
Eight: Reforming Rudolf.....	200
Nine: The Philosopher's Stone.....	226
Ten: Alchemical Visions	255
Eleven: Burning the Books.....	398
Twelve: Expelled From The Empire	325
Thirteen: Making Gold.....	361
Fourteen: Swapping Wives	381
Fifteen: Sir Edward Kelly, Baron of Bohemia ...	421
Sixteen: The Fall	453
Acknowledgements and Sources	490

This is a true story, though that is not to say that some of the participants may not have lied. The documents are all authentic, though they may well contain misapprehensions or deliberate disinformation. But the words given here are the words spoken by spirits through Edward Kelly, and John Dee's interrogations of those spirits. They are supplemented with Dee's diary records of what went on, together with the words and letters of others, spies and statesmen, observers and informers and chroniclers. The original materials are preserved in the main in the British Library, the Bodleian Library and the Public Record Office, and are listed in the Sources. I have selected from these voluminous documents, modernized spelling, standardized names, and offered some contextualizing commentary.

M.W.

ONE : TALBOT

1

The story starts in ambiguity and uncertainty, which is the way it continues. It starts with John Dee looking for an assistant, ‘a good seer and scryer of spiritual apparitions, in crystalline receptacles or in open air.’ Dee was fifty-five. He had married for the second time four years earlier, in 1578, and now had two young children. He was a mathematician of considerable reputation, not only in England where he lived but in Europe where he had travelled and lectured. He regularly gave navigational briefings for journeys of commercial exploration to North America and to China. He had advised on the astrologically appropriate date for Queen Elizabeth’s coronation. He had proposed a scheme for a national library, which was disregarded. But he had reached the limits of what he could learn from books. He had the largest private library in Britain but it was not enough. Now he wanted direct access to divine knowledge. Mediated through angels of course. He was not looking for private tuition from God. But, as he put it in his prayer to God, ‘Seeing I have read in your books and records how Enoch enjoyed your favour and conversation, with Moses you were familiar, and also that to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Joshua, Gideon, Esdras, Daniel, Tobias and sundry others your good angels were sent by your disposition to instruct them, inform them, help them, in worldly and domestic affairs, and sometimes to satisfy their desires, doubts and questions of your secrets,’ then he, too, John Dee, sought to have this divine illumination.

The first experiments were unsatisfactory. Dee found an assistant, Barnabas Saul, a preacher and master of arts. December 22, 1581, they prayed to God and Dee asked for the good angel Anael to appear. Saul gazed into the crystal and, Dee records, ‘he saw there one which answered to that name. But being earnestly requested of me to tell the truth if he were Anael, another did appear very beautiful, with apparel yellow, glittering, like gold, and his head had beams like star beams blazing and spreading from it, his eyes fiery.’ But as he noted, it was ‘an illuding intruder even at the first, putting himself as an angel of light. Take heed always of undue security.’

In February 1582 Saul was indicted, but released, ‘his indictment being by law found insufficient at Westminster Hall.’ Dee does not record in his diary what the charge was. If it involved summoning up spirits Dee was lucky not to have been charged too. Whatever it was, Saul had come to the unfavourable attention of someone, and to proceed in the experiments was dangerous.

The project could easily have come to an end. But on the contrary it was now to resume far more splendidly. Within a few days a new seer arrived. Whoever it was who amazingly appeared so opportunely, he came under the name of Edward Talbot. Later he is known as Edward Kelly. If, that is, Talbot and Kelly are the same person. Dee recorded what happened in his diaries. He kept two sets of diaries. There was the private diary, and there was the secret record of the spiritual project. From the beginning it is a world of doubles. The private diary was recorded in the margins of an almanac, the *Ephemerides* of Stadius for 1554–1600, published in Cologne in 1570.

The private diary records the events of the first week of March, 1582. March 6, ‘Barnabas Saul came this day again about one o’clock and went to London the same afternoon. He confessed that he neither heard or saw any spiritual creature any more.’ What was the force of that ‘confessed’ and ‘any more’? Was it a confession to the authorities or a confession to Dee? Had he seen spiritual creatures before? But how long before? Had he seen them when working with Dee, or was that a fabrication? Or had he been frightened off and now denied that he had any powers as a seer, scryer, crystal-gazer? March 8, ‘Mr Clerkson and his friend came to my house. Barnabas went home again about 3 o’clock, he lay not at my house now; he went I say on Thursday, when Mr Clerkson came.’ The break with Barnabas Saul was final. That evening there was, Dee noted, a magnificent display of the aurora borealis. ‘The sky seemed to be on fire, and to grow red like blood as it spread in different directions.’ Was this a portent of amazing things to come?

And now Talbot appears. Whether he was the friend who had already visited with Mr Clerkson is unclear. And if he was it makes it no clearer who he was. But it was the beginning of momentous events.

March 9, ‘Friday: at dinner time Mr Clerkson and Mr Talbot declared a great deal of Barnabas’ naughty dealing towards me: as in telling Mr Clerkson ill things of me that I should mock his friend: and that he was weary of me: that I would so flatter his friend the learned man that I would bereave him of him. But his friend told me, before my wife and Mr Clerkson, that a spiritual creature told him that Barnabas had cozened both Mr Clerkson and me. The injuries which this Barnabas had done me in various ways were very great.’

The diary is known as Dee’s Private Diary, but someone else had access to it. The concluding lines of this entry have been partially erased. They read, ‘This learned man after dinner promised to do what he could to further my knowledge in magic ... with fairies ... A monstrous and horrible lie.’ Above the entry is written: ‘You that read this underwritten assure

yourself that it is a shameful lie, for Talbot neither studied for any such thing nor showed himself dishonest in anything.' Dee himself added a further comment. 'This is Mr Talbot or that learned man's own writing in my book, very unduly as he came by it.' Several other notices of Talbot are erased in the diary, whether by Talbot or by Dee it is impossible to say, but most probably by the former.

3

Talbot visited Dee again the following morning, Saturday, March 10, 1582, at 11.15. This time he came alone. Dee recorded what happened in his spiritual transactions. 'One Mr Edward Talbot came to my house, and he being willing and desirous to see or show something in spiritual practice, would have had me to have done something therein. And I truly excused myself therein as not in the vulgarly accounted magic neither studied nor exercised, but confessed myself long time to have been desirous to have help in my philosophical studies through the company and information of the blessed angels of God. And thereupon I brought forth to him my stone in the frame (which was given me of a friend) and I said to him that I was credibly informed that to it (after a sort) were answerable some good angels. And also that I was once willed by a scryer to call for the good angel Anchor to appear in that stone to my own sight. And therefore I desired him to call him and, if he would, Anachor and Anilos, likewise accounted good angels. For I was not prepared thereunto.'

It is all very guarded. It is a private spiritual record yet Dee avoids mentioning both the name of the person who gave him the stone ('a friend') and the name of the previous scryer. Why mention that the stone was given him by a friend if he omitted the name; if the record was written only for himself, did he need to say that someone had given him the stone? Was he afraid the record might fall into the wrong hands and be used against him? There was every reason to be cautious. In the margin, against the record of Talbot's request to Dee to show him 'something in spiritual practice' there is a note, this time Dee's own.

'Note: he had two days before made the like demand and request unto me: but he went away unsatisfied. For his coming was to entrap me, if I had had any dealing with wicked spirits, as he confessed often times after: and that he was set on, etc.'

Dee had been imprisoned in Hampton Court in 1555 for allegedly trying to destroy Queen Mary by enchantments. On 'false information,' he wrote. It was not something you forgot, even after a quarter of a century. He had been acquitted of treason and then examined by Bishop Bonner on religious matters. 'I was prisoner long, and bedfellow with Bartlet Greene, who was burnt.'

Who had set Talbot onto Dee is lost behind that ‘etc’ as such things generally are. Talbot may have ‘often times after’ confessed to the attempted entrapment, but whether he was working for Burghley and Walsingham’s intelligence networks or some other organization is never recorded by Dee. Nor is it clear when Talbot first made the confession. The spiritual transactions were written up later from notes taken at the time, and the marginal notes were added over a number of years.

If Talbot’s purpose was to entrap Dee, why did he stay and confess when he failed? Why did he participate in the angelic dialogues? Did he have protection so that he could operate as a spiritual provocateur with Dee? Was the intent to reach a point of frustration with the angelic dialogues and then to incite Dee to move on to summoning up known devils? And if Dee had known early on that Talbot had come to entrap him, would he have proceeded with the angelic operations? So the confession might have been made some considerable time later, after the project was well under way. And did Talbot anyway fail? Perhaps after all he did succeed in entrapping Dee, and the whole narration that follows was a consequence of just that entrapment, that someone had something over Dee and probably Talbot too, and that is why they did the things they did. But that is something about which we can only speculate and never be sure.

4

Edward Talbot set the stone on Dee’s desk and, kneeling before it, began to pray and to entreat the good angels to appear. Dee prayed in his oratory. Within a quarter of an hour Talbot saw one figure in the stone but, assuming that the three they had invoked, Anchor, Anachor and Anilos, would appear, he waited for the two others. Then Dee came to the stone and ‘after some thanks to God and welcome to the good creature,’ asked his name.

‘And he spoke plainly (to the hearing of E. T.) that his name is Uriel.’

‘Are you one of them that are answerable, upon due observations performed, to this stone?’ Dee asked.

‘I am.’

‘Are there any more beside you?’

‘Michael and Raphael. But Michael is the chief in our work,’ he replied in Latin.

‘Is my book of Soyga of any excellency?’ It was a book in Arabic, *Aldaraia sive Soyga: Tractatus Astrologico Magicus*, which Dee valued greatly but could not read.

‘That book was revealed to Adam in Paradise by good angels of God.’

‘Will you give me any instructions how I may read those tables of Soyga?’

‘I can. But Michael is the sole interpreter of that book.’

‘I was told that after I could read that book I should live but two years and a half.’

It hadn’t stopped him asking for instructions on how to read it.

Uriel was reassuring. ‘You will live a hundred and odd years.’

‘What may I or must I do to have the sight and presence of Michael, that blessed angel?’

He was told to pray and invoke Michael with sincerity and humility.

‘Oh, my great and long desire has been to be able to read those tables of Soyga.’

For all this new dialogue with angels, Dee still had that attachment to mysterious books, that belief that wisdom was contained in written pages. Written pages that required spiritual guidance in order to be understood.

‘Is there any special time or hour to be observed to deal for the enjoying of Michael?’

‘Every hour is the hour for us.’

Then there appeared in the stone a strange seal. Like books, seals and hieroglyphs were also alluring containers of secret knowledge.

‘What is the intent or use of this?’ Dee asked.

‘This seal shaped in gold is for the protection of the body in all places, times and occasions.’

But this, it later emerged, was not the true Uriel but an illuding spirit who had intruded himself and this seal. So we ceased, with thanks to God, records Dee, and I mused much upon this action and laid all up in mind and writing.

5

That same Saturday, at five in the afternoon, they consulted the stone again. Dee asked for some instruction for reading Soyga but Uriel told him he had to consult Michael.

Dee said that he did not know how to do that.

‘He is to be invoked by certain of the psalms of David and prayers,’ said Uriel.

And then Dee was told that he and this new scryer were to work together.

‘There must be conjunction of minds in prayer between you two to God continually. It is the will of God that you should jointly have the knowledge of his angels together. You had attained to the sight of Michael but for the imperfection of Saul.’

Then a chair and a table appeared in the stone. Dee asked what they meant and was told the chair was a seat of perfection ‘from which things shall be shown to you which you have long desired’ and the table was ‘a mystery not yet to be known. These two shall remain in the stone to the sight of all undefiled creatures.’

Then they were given instructions for making the table.

‘You must use a four square table, two cubits square.’ A cubit was the length of a forearm. On it, they were told, ‘must be set a divine seal which is already perfected in a book of yours. This seal must not be looked on without great reverence and devotion. This seal is to be made of perfect wax. I mean wax which is clean purified; we have no respect of colours. This seal must be nine inches in diameter. The roundness must be twenty-seven inches and somewhat more. The thickness of it must be of an inch and half a quarter. And a figure of a cross must be on the back side of it. The table is to be made of sweet wood; and to be of two cubits high, with four feet, with four of the former seals under the four feet. The characters and words on the sides of the square table are to be written in yellow, made of perfect oil, used in the church.’

‘What oil is that?’ asked Dee.

‘The oil is perfect prayers. Of other oil I have no respect.’

Then Uriel gave warning of an evil spirit. ‘There is a spirit named Lundrumguffa using you, who seeks your destruction in the hatred of men, in the hurt of your goods. Discharge him tomorrow with brimstone. He haunts your house and seeks the destruction of your daughter. His pretence was to have maimed you in your shoulder last night and long ago. If you do not discharge him tomorrow he will hurt both your wife and your daughter. He is here now. Give him a general discharge from your family and house. He will seek Saul’s death, who is accursed.’

‘I know no means or art to do this by,’ said Dee. ‘I burned in flame of brimstone Maherion’s name and character when I found Saul secretly dealing with him, which I had often forbidden him. And yet he came after and would have carried Saul away quick, as Robert Hilton, George and others of my house can testify.’

‘The cursed will come to the cursed.’

‘I beseech you to discharge him,’ said Dee, ‘and to bind him somewhere far off as Raphael did for Tobias’ sake with the wicked spirit of Asmodeus.’

‘But Tobias did his part. Art is vain in respect of God’s power. Brimstone is a means.’

‘When shall I do this?’ asked Dee.

‘Tomorrow at the time of prayers.’

It had been an extraordinary day. Dee made a note in his copy of Julius Firmicus Waliis’ commentary on Manilius’ *Astronomica* 5, beside the passage ‘seek beneath the earth for gold and hidden spoils.’ ‘I did conjecture the blazing star in Cassiopeia appearing anno 1572 to signify the finding of some great treasure or the philosopher’s stone . . . This I told to Mr Ed Dyer at the same time. How truly it fell out in anno 1582, March 10, it may appear in time to

come ad stuporem mundi.' To the amazement of the world.

6

The following day, Sunday, March 11, Lundrumguffa was disposed of.

Uriel being called by E. T., Dee records, there appeared one clothed with a long robe of purple all spangled with gold, and on his head a garland or wreath of gold, his eyes sparkling.

Dee asked whether the characters noted for the table were perfect.

'They are perfect; there is no question.'

'Are you Uriel?' Dee asked; there were always questions for Dee.

Then immediately one came in and threw the brave spirit down by the shoulders and beat him mightily with a whip, and took all his robes and apparel off him: and then he remained all hairy and ugly and still the spirit was beaten by him who came in after him. And that spirit, which so beat him, said to the hearing of my scryer, 'Thus are the wicked scourged.'

'Are you Uriel, who speaks that?' Dee asked.

'I am he. Write down and mark this for it is worth noting. This was your persecutor Lundrumguffa. I brought him here to let you see how God has punished your enemy.'

And Talbot reported how he drew the wicked spirit away by the legs and threw him into a great pit, and washed his hands, as it were, with the sweat of his own head, for he seemed to be all in a sweat.

7

It was a world of evil and deception but the faithful were promised assistance. The angel Michael came and told them, 'I will reveal you this ring, which was never revealed since the death of Solomon, with whom I was present. I was present with him in strength and mercy. This is it. This is it by which all miracles and divine works and wonders were wrought by Solomon. This is it which I have revealed to you. This is it which philosophy dreams of. This is it which the angels scarce know. This is it and blessed be his name.'

It was a ring of gold with a seal engraved in it and a round thing in the middle of the seal and a thing like a V through the top of the circle and an L in the bottom and a bar clean through it and these four letters in it, P E L E.

After that he threw the ring on the table and it seemed to fall through the table and then he said, 'So shall it do at your command. Without this you shall do nothing.'

He went away and returned with the seal which he showed the other day, and opened his sword and told the scryer to read. He read EMETH. Then the sword closed up again and he

said, 'This I open to you because you marvelled at the seal of God. This is the name of the seal which he blessed for ever. This is the seal itself. This is holy. This is pure. This is for ever. Amen.'

Then the seal vanished. And I said to my friend the scribe, Dee records, 'Indeed, the other day I considered various fashions for the seal and I found them very different from each other, and therefore I needed to know which of them I shall imitate, or how to make one perfect of them all.'

It was a confirmation that the spirits knew what he was thinking, knew what concerned him, voluntarily delivering the instruction that he wanted but had not asked for.

Emeth is Hebrew for truth.

8

Dee lived at Mortlake on the river Thames, a few miles upstream of London. The house had been his mother's property but she surrendered it to Dee in 1579. He 'dwelt in a house near the waterside a little westward from the church,' according to Goodwife Faldo who had known him, and there were grounds with hedges; the barber of neighbouring Chiswick, Walter Hooper, was hired to keep them in good order and to cut them twice a year. There were alchemical laboratories, there were rooms for the assistants Dee usually had living there, and the house also contained Dee's extensive library. A diary of his alchemical experiments in 1581 is preserved in the Bodleian Library

It was a strategically situated spot, not far from the Queen's palace at Richmond. The Thames was a regularly used waterway for the Queen, and others, to travel between Greenwich, Westminster, Windsor and Richmond. Sir Francis Walsingham, the Queen's Secretary of State and controller of the secret service, lived near by at Barn Elms.

Dee had a huge library in his house at Mortlake, three thousand books and close to a thousand manuscripts. It was the largest private library in Britain. The dissolution of the monasteries thirty years earlier had meant that the monastic collections had been dispersed, often destroyed. The reforming commissioners of Edward VI had massively purged university college libraries of what were officially termed outdated and space consuming volumes. Dee made a point of salvaging books and manuscripts from these sources, as well as purchasing from trade booksellers and importers from Europe. His collection was scientific, mathematical and medical. There were alchemical and astrological works and studies in angelology. He had researched the possibilities of summoning up angels and the classic texts were there to correlate with the spiritual actions.

The visions were usually seen by the scryer, Talbot, within the stone. Occasionally they appeared outside it, but there was more of a risk of devilish deceivers appearing outside the stone than in it. No description of the stone survives, but it seems that Dee had more than one. Some drawings in the margin of the spiritual records suggest that they were spherical balls, and from evidence in the records we can assume they were of crystal. In the British Museum there is a black obsidian mirror, of Mexican origin, which is said to have belonged to Dee. It is doubtful, however, whether this was used in the scrying sessions.

Dee himself does not seem to have seen or heard the spiritual creatures directly, although he recorded in his diary that the year before, May 25, 1581, ‘I had sight in crystallo offered me, and I saw.’ But that seems to have been a rare occasion. His practice now was to put his questions, and the spiritual creatures would answer through Talbot, who saw them in the stone. Dee would then write down what was said. The notes were later transcribed, and the records of these sessions bound up into books. Other manuscript books were compiled which abstracted and collated the information given.

On March 14, Dee records, ‘being desirous to proceed in this matter, by consent, we bent ourselves to the action. And after E. T. had called Uriel and saw him, I came to the desk from my oratory.’

The chair and the table appeared continuously. Dee, afraid that any other creature should come into the stone instead of Uriel earnestly required the spiritual creature that appeared to show who he was and what was his name.

At length he answered and said to the hearing of E. T., ‘Uriel is my name, with some called Nariel.’

Dee noted in the margin of the record against the name, ‘Agrippa has so, chapter 24, book 3, *Occult Philosophy*.’ Dee had three editions of the work in his library; the first volume of the earliest edition, published in Antwerp in 1531, and two later editions, the three volume 1550 and the four volume 1559.

But getting caught up discussing Cornelius Agrippa in the course of the actions provoked a spiritual rebuke. There was a vision of the angel Michael and of a figure that turned out to be Dee. ‘Then the man turned his face toward E. T. the scryer, and the man resembled me (John Dee) in countenance. And then he turned to Michael again. Michael wrote upon the man’s back ANGELUS TUAE PROFESSIONIS. Then E. T. asked me if there were such angels of a man’s profession, and I answered, “Yes, as in Agrippa and others is declared.”’

At this point Michael rebuked them.

‘Leave your folly, hold your peace. Have you not read that they that cleave unto God are made like him?’

Dee admitted he had.

‘You came here to learn and not to dispute,’ said Michael.

But though Dee left off his discussion with Talbot, he annotated that day’s action with the Agrippa reference – *De Triplici hois Custode*, book 3, chapter 22. And he annotated two other names given them by Michael, Na and Pele, with a reference to another book that was in his library: ‘see Reuchlin, *Librum de Verbo Mirifico de noie*.’

The following day the spiritual actions again correlated with Agrippa. Dee implored the spiritual creature, ‘I would to God I knew your name truly, or what peculiar letter I might set for you, to note your words and actions by.’

‘Name I have none but by my office. Salamian came not hither but by me. He is a mighty prince, governing the heavens under my power. This is sufficient for your instruction. I was with Solomon in all his works and wonders; and so was this whom God has appointed unto him. The divines know his name: and he is not hidden from the face of the earth. His name is written in the book which lies in the window.’

‘Do you mean Agrippa’s book?’ asked Dee. ‘And is it there expressed by the name Salamian?’

‘I have said.’

Dee noted, It is *Elementis Magicis Petri de Abano* printed with *Clavis Agrippa, The Key to Agrippa*, which lay in my oratory almost under my window.

10

These spiritual actions were a scientific inquiry. To be able to confirm details of the angelic messages with printed evidence provided some sort of assurance of the accuracy and good faith of the messages. Though such correlations could also be interpreted as evidence of bad faith. Talbot was evidently an experienced scryer. It was likely he would have consulted the available books for summoning up angels. These were the manuals of his art. The correlations, whether conscious or unconscious, could be ascribed to his reading. Unconscious memory, perhaps: or if it was all fraud, what better way to substantiate it than to have some material in the messages conformable to the classic texts? If Barnabas Saul had been deceiving Dee, why not Talbot? Were the mentions of Saul’s evil ways messages from the angels, or were they Talbot’s own way of discrediting his predecessor and confirming his own position? Yet to be surprised or doubtful that the summoned spiritual creatures would confirm the

researches of Agrippa and Reuchlin and Petrus de Abano is to discredit the whole project. If the inquiries were serious, then correlations were to be expected. A lack of correlation would put everyone's researches in doubt, Dee's, Talbot's, Agrippa's, Reuchlin's, Petrus de Abano's, all of them.

11

It was a world of evil and deception and even in their spiritual actions they were surrounded by the forces of evil.

'You do not know, or you do not wish to know,' Salamian told Dee, 'that Mammon and his servants are present about you, whose presence hinders the presence of the virtues.'

He took a big flame of fire that appeared beside him in the air and flung it up heavenward, and continued.

'Mammon is a king whom God hates, whose sect continually tempt, provoke and stir up wickedness against the lord and against his anointed. But he dies. Blessed be God for ever. Drive him away.'

'It is incomparably more easy for you to do,' said Dee. 'And as for my part, I feel neither in body nor soul any token of his presence or working.'

At that Salamian caused the whole chamber to appear very plainly in the stone and so showed there a great company of evil spirits to be in the chamber, and among them one most horrible and grisly, threatening and approaching their heads and scorning and gnashing at them.

'God determines his mysteries by art and virtue,' said Salamian.

Then, Dee records, he willed me very eagerly to drive them away. And I prayed fervently. And there seemed to come into the stone one which had very long arms and he drove them away courageously. And so they were driven away.

12

'What order will you appoint to us two in respect of our being together?' Dee asked. 'My friend here may have other intents and purposes of his affairs than will serve me for having his aid in these actions.'

'Join in prayers,' they were told, 'for God has blessed you. Do not doubt. Consider these mysteries.'

In late March they were instructed in the true circle of eternity comprehending all virtue. Dee sat with a circle drawn before him.

‘Divide this outward circle into forty equal parts, whose greatest numbers are four,’ Michael instructed.

Dee divided the circle first into four, and then each quarter into ten. Michael then called Semiel. ‘To him are the mysteries of these tables known,’

‘I am his tables,’ said Semiel. ‘Behold these are his tables.’

Forty white creatures, all in long white silk robes, like children, came into the stone. Michael’s sword flamed, the earth quaked, the forty fell down and prayed.

‘Note. Here is a mystery,’ said Michael.

Then one of the forty stepped forward and opened his breast which was covered with silk and there appeared a great T all of gold.

‘Note the number,’ said Michael.

Over the T stood the figure 4.

The forty all cried, ‘It lives and multiplies for ever, blessed be his name.’

‘Place that in the first place,’ Michael instructed. ‘It is the name of the lord.’

The first creature shut up his bosom and vanished away like fire. There was a great clap of thunder and then a second creature stepped forward. Then this creature opened his breast and fire came out of the stone as before and a great Roman G appeared.

‘Write with reverence,’ said Michael, ‘these mysteries are wonderful, the number of his name and knowledge. This is it, nine. Behold it is but one and it is marvellous.’

And on it went, forty letters and numbers. Sometimes it would be the same letter with a different number, sometimes the same number with a different letter, sometimes it would be a letter without a number. And the creatures would appear and disappear, sometimes in rain, sometimes in fire, sometimes like a rainbow, sometimes like a white cock. And the letters would be revealed sometimes in the breasts of the creatures, sometimes on tablets of gold, sometimes on bleeding hearts. Floods of blood and water, surges of fire, garments of silk, clouds of smoke.

I asked if I should not cease now by reason of the folk waiting for us to come to supper, Dee records.

‘Lay away the world, continue your work,’ said Michael.

A man’s raw heart, a body full of serpent’s heads, a bloody sword, a golden crown, a trumpet.

Then one stepped out having all his body under his white silken habit (as they all had) very brave after the fashion of these days, with great ruffs, cut hose, a great bellied doublet, a velvet hat on his head with a feather, and he advanced himself braggingly. He had burned into his forehead a little n, and Michael said, 'His number is not in heaven,' at which he went away.

'The old serpent reaches out his head to devour the innocent,' said Michael.

14

After supper, Dee records, Mr Talbot went up to his chamber to prayers and Uriel showed himself to him and told him that something was amiss in the table which I had been occupied with that day. At that Mr Talbot came to me into my study and asked for the seal from me, for he wished to correct something in it, he said. I delivered the seal to him and he brought it back a little time later, corrected; both in the numbers, for quantity, and some for their place over or under, and also in one letter or place that had been omitted. I denied omitting anything expressed to me. And I doubted anything was omitted since Michael's last words about two places remaining empty were that these two are hidden as yet. If I had omitted any, more than two would have been wanting.

So we thought it a good idea to ask Michael for judgement and the dissolving of this uncertainty. Coming to the stone he was ready. I propounded this former doubt.

'You omitted no letter or history that was told you, but the sryer omitted to declare it to you.'

'May I so record it?' Dee asked.

'It is justly reformed by Uriel,' said Michael.

The one being omitted by the descrier and the other not yet declared to us might make that phrase meet to be spoken, 'these two are hidden as yet,' Dee noted.

Then Michael gave them instructions on how to interpret the information.

'The circumference which is done contains seven names. Seven names contain seven angels. Every letter contains seven angels. The numbers are applied to the letters. When you know the seven names you shall understand the seven angels.'

The names of the angels were assembled by code. The first letter given was a T with a four above it. The four placed above meant that the next letter was to be found by counting four letters towards the right round the circle. If the number was under the letter, they counted towards the left. A letter without a number ended the word.

Dee assembled the first name. 'ThAaoth. Is this as it should be?

'That is not the name,' Michael said. 'You will understand everything in the next call. The

rule is perfect. Call again within an hour and it will be shown.'

'Salvete,' Michael greeted them, the hour having passed. 'You erred,' he told Dee, but it was not Dee's fault since he did not know the nature of the error. 'Some letters are significant in themselves, indeed no letters but double numbers being the name of God. You have erred in the first name mis-setting down A a, that is twice A together which alters the word. Wherever you find two 'A's together the first is not to be placed within the name but rather with his inward power. I am not speaking of any that come at the beginning of the word but such as land in the middle.'

Dee took the opportunity to query the division of the table into forty characters.

'I have read in the *Cabala* of the name of God of 42 letters, but not yet of any of 40 letters.' He spelled out the Hebrew letters. 'I am not good in the Hebrew tongue, but you know my meaning.'

Michael replied, 'The letters being so taken out, being a name and a number, certifies the old rule of 42 letters when you restore them.' And then he told them about the power of the circle. 'Note, out of this circle shall no creature pass that enters if it be made upon the earth. My meaning is, if it is defiled. This shall you prove to be a mystery unknown to man. Beasts, birds, fowl and fish all reverence it. In this they were all created. In this are all things contained. In time you shall find it, in Adam's treatise from Paradise. Look to the mysteries, for they are true.'

And then he concluded, 'You are watched all this night.' Did he mean watched over and protected, or watched and spied upon?

'Who is even now at the door. Clerkson. Blessed are those whose portion is not with the wicked.'

15

March 20, 1582.

'Shut up your doors,' said Michael.

I had left the outermost door of my study open and had only shut the portal door of it, Dee noted.

'What would you have?' asked Michael.

'Wisdom,' said Dee.

'Read the names you have written.'

'Th(a)oth, Gal(a)as, Gethog, Horl*n, Innon, A(a)oth, Galetsog.'

I had written these according to the rule before given, as I understood it, Dee recorded.

‘Look to the last name.’

I had written Galetsog by misreckoning the numbers, where I found it should be Galethog with an h and not s.

‘Otherwise you would have erred. They are all right, but not in order. The second is first, his name be honoured for ever. The first here must be our third. And the third here must be our second.

‘Set them down thus: 1. Galas. 2. Gethog. 3. Thaoth. 4. Horl*n. 5. Innon. 6. Aaoth. 7. Galethog.’

And then the instructions continued, more letters, more numbers. And after every seven letters shown Michael put them in his bosom as soon as he had shown them fully. The plates on which the letters were shown had the form of the segment of a circle and seemed to be of pure gold. When the seven letters were placed he said, ‘All are one.’ Then he pulled all the seven plates out of his bosom and Uriel kneeled down before him. Then the plates seemed to have two wings on each of them and to fly up to heaven.

16

On March 20 Talbot was instructed, ‘He must go for the books else they will perish.’

Dee explained in a note: he meant that my partner Ed Talbot should go to fetch the books from Lancaster (or thereby) which were the Lord Mouteagle’s books, which Mr Mort yet has.’

William Stanley, third Lord Mouteagle, who had died the previous year, is presumably meant. He was a member of one of those powerful, Catholic aristocratic families, around whom plots and suspicions flourished. His grandson William had inherited the courtesy title but he was only seven, so the books are unlikely to have been his. The young Mouteagle was later involved in the failed rebellion of the Earl of Essex. He escaped with a fine and became an informer on Catholic conspiracies. It is generally believed that he was the informer who revealed the Gunpowder plot.

Whether or not Talbot went to Lancaster is unknown. Dee records in his diary for March 22 that ‘Mr Talbot went to London to take his journey for the books.’ But he was back five weeks later, by April 28, without having obtained them.

17

For the scryer it could be an exhausting experience. ‘Note that my scryer was very faint and his head giddy and his eyes dazzled by reason of the sights seen so bright and fiery, etc.’

Michael advised 'Cease for a quarter of an hour'.

The spiritual creatures were not always so sympathetic. They could often be very critical.

'Take heed of punishment for your last slackness,' Michael threatened.

'If you mean any slackness on my behalf,' Dee tried to explain, 'truly it was and is for lack of ability to buy and prepare the things you appointed.'

He was having difficulty in acquiring the materials necessary to assemble the table. He told them that if they would provide the ability he would do it quickly.

The response to that was a vision of a great hill of gold with serpents lying on it. Michael struck it with his sword and it fell headlong into a mighty, great water.

'Do you understand?' Michael asked Dee.

'No,' said Dee.

He razed the hill away as if it had never been.

'So it is of this worldly ability,' he said.

18

At the end of April 1582 Michael told Talbot that he should get married. Talbot was unhappy at the instruction. 'Very sore disquieted,' Dee records. According to Talbot, 'He said that I must betake myself to the world and forsake the world. That is that I should marry. Which I have no natural inclination to do. Neither with a safe conscience may I do it, contrary to my vow and profession. Wherefore I think and hope there is some other meaning in their words.'

Michael insisted he must do it. 'You know our mind.'

What did Talbot mean by his vow and profession? Did he mean that he was forbidden to marry because he was a Catholic priest? What else could he have meant? Was he operating underground in England, under an assumed name perhaps, put into England from a seminary in Europe? Walsingham's intelligence network had intercepted and turned a number of such priests and used them as informers on other Catholics. Was Talbot one of those? This perhaps explains the Mounteagle connection. Or was he a renegade priest, disillusioned with Rome, turning to magic? Both sorts, priests become informers and priests become magicians, turn up in this story.

And as for marrying, was this a general instruction, or did Talbot have someone in particular in mind that Michael was instructing him to marry?

Dee now had his list of forty-nine good angels. Baligon, Bornogo, Bapnido, Besgeme, Blumapo, Bmamgal, Basledf, Bobogel, Befafes, Basmelo, Bernole, Branglo, Brisfli, Bnagole, Babalel, Butmono, Bazpana, Blintom, Bragiop, Bermale, Bonefon, Bynepor, Blisdon, Balceor, Belmara, Benpagi, Barnafa, Bmilges, Bnaspol, Brorges, Baspalo, Binodab, Bariges, Binofon, Baldago, Bnapsen, Bralges, Bormila, Buscnab, Bminpol, Bartiro, Bliigan, Blumaza, Bagenol, Bablibo, Busduna, Blingef, Barfort, Bamnode.

Friday, May 4, Talbot refused to continue with the actions.

‘E. T. would not willingly now deal with the former creatures, utterly misliking and discrediting them because they willed him to marry. Neither would he put off his hat in any prayer to God for the action with them. Whereupon,’ wrote Dee, ‘I went into my oratory, and called unto God for his divine help.’

Talbot came to the stone and saw there those two whom hitherto we were instructed to be Michael and Uriel.

Michael and Uriel both knelt holding up their hands and Michael seemed to sweat water abundantly, somewhat reddish or bloodish. Seven bundles, like faggots, come down from heaven, and Michael takes them kneeling and Uriel takes a thing like a super-altar and lays it upon the table and with a thing like a censer makes perfume at the four corners of the table, the smoke ascending up and the censer, at the last, being set on the table it seemed to fall through the table. Uriel seems to be all in a white long robe tucked up, his garment full of pleats, and seemed now to have wings which hitherto, from the beginning of these kind of actions, he did not, and on his head a beautiful crown with a white cross over the crown. Uriel takes the seven bundles from Michael and with reverence lays them on the super-altar.

There comes a man as though he were all of perfect pure glistering gold, sometimes seeming to have one eye and sometimes three. From under the table comes a great smoke and the place seems to shake. Uriel now lies prostrate on his face and Michael continually prayed, sweating. The glorious man seemed to open the covering of the seven bundles, being of various coloured silk, and there it appeared that these seemed to have in them of all creatures some in most glorious show.

The glorious man seemed to stand upon a little hill of flaming fire. He takes off of one of the bundles a thing like a little bird and it hovers before him as though it had life, and then it rested upon the thing like a super-altar. This glorious man seems to be open in the front and his

breast somewhat spotted with blood. He has a forked beard of brownish colour, the hair of his head long, hanging down to his shoulders, but his face, because of the beautiful glittering, cannot be discerned. His hairs shake as though the wind carried them. This man blesses the bird, making a cross over it, and so he did three times. He looks up to heaven. Now the bird, which before seemed to be but as big as a sparrow, seems to be as great as a swan, very beautiful, but of many colours.

Now Michael looks up and holds up his hands to heaven and says, 'So, so, so, our God.'

Uriel said, 'I will multiply everything by his blessing.'

The former beautiful man takes this fowl, sets it on the bundle and on the place from where it was taken. And now the place where this bird stood before seems also to be proportionally as big as the bird thus enlarged. This man takes another bird and puts the wing of it behind the wing of the first, as though he yoked them. This second bird, at this first taking, was as big as the first was become, (increased as it showed), and it was also very beautiful.

'All is suddenly dark,' said Talbot, 'and nothing to be seen, neither chair nor anything else.'

Then a voice was heard, like Michael's, saying, 'It was a bird, and it is a bird, absent there is nothing but quantity. Believe. The world is of necessity. His necessity is governed by supernatural wisdom. Necessarily you fall and of necessity shall rise again. Follow me, love me, embrace me, behold, I am.'

Now all the darkness vanished, the man is gone. Uriel stands at the table and Michael sits now in his chair, and said, 'This does God work for your understanding. It is in vain to strive. All government is in his hands. What else do you wish?'

'Progress and advance in virtue and truth to the honour and glory of God,' said Dee.

'This has answered all our cavillations,' Michael replied.

'What has answered all our cavillations?'

'You have written,' said Michael. 'You shall see one more thing.'

The two birds which were there before and gone out of sight now are shown again, but none of the bundles appear. They seem to grow to a huge size, as big as mountains, incredibly big, and they seem to hover up in the air, and to fly up towards heaven and with their wings to touch the sky, and one of them with his bill seems to take stars into it, and the other bird to take them from the same bird and to place them again in the sky. And this they did very often, and in different places of the heavens with great celerity. After this they seemed to fly over cities and towns and to break clouds in pieces as they passed, and to cause all dust to fly from all walls and towers as they passed and so to make them clean. And in the streets, as these two birds

flew, seemed various brave fellows like bishops and princes and kings to pass, and by the wings of these birds they were stricken down. But simple, silly ones like beggars, lame and halt, children and old-aged men and women seemed to pass quietly, untouched and unoverthrown by these two birds. And then they seemed to come to a place where they lifted up with the ends of their wings four carcasses of dead men out of the ground with crowns on their heads, one of which seemed to be a child. First these four seemed lean and dead. Then they seemed quick and in good liking, and they being raised up parted from each other and went into four sundry ways, east, west, north and south. Now these two fowls having their wings joined together alight upon a great hill and there the first fowl gripped the earth mightily and there appeared various metals and the fowl spurned them away still. Then appeared an old man's head, hair and all on, very much withered. They tossed it between them with their feet. And they broke it, and in the head appeared, instead of the brains, a stone, round, of the size of a tennis ball, of four colours, white, black, red and green. One of them, he that broke the skull, puts the round stone to the other's mouth or bill. The other eats or nibbles on it and so does the other also. Now these two birds are turned into men. And each of them has two crowns like paper crowns, white and bright, but seem not to be silver. Their teeth are gold, and so likewise their hands, feet, tongue, eyes and ears likewise all gold. On each of these two men are twenty-six crowns of gold on their right shoulders, every one of them greater than the other. They have by their sides satchels, like palmers' bags, full of gold, and they take it out and seemed to sow it as corn, going or stepping forward like seedsmen. Then Michael said, 'This is the end.' The two men are vanished away. 'Learn the mystery of this,' said Michael.

'Teach us, oh you spiritual creatures,' said Dee.

'Joy and health give to the rich; open strong locks; be merciful to the wicked; pluck up the poor; read to the ignorant,' said Michael. 'I have satisfied you. Understand. Read them over. God shall give you some light in them. I have satisfied you. Both how you shall be joined, by whom, to what intent and purpose; what you are, what you were, what you shall be, videlicet in God. Lock up this mystery. Forget not our counsel. O God, you open all things, secret are your mysteries and holy is your name for ever. The virtue of his presence, here left, be amongst you.'

'Amen,' said Dee. And then he asked, 'What am I to do with the wax, the table, the ring or the lamin, etc?'

A lamin was a thin metal plate used in magical practice.

'When the things are ready then you shall know how to use them,' Michael replied.

'What shall I do for the engraving of the ring? May I get a man to do it if E. T. will not

engrave it?’

‘Cause them to be made up according to instruction by any honest man.’

‘What do you say concerning the chamber for our practice? May my furthermost little chamber serve if the bed be taken down?’

‘At the next call for the chamber you shall know what to do.’

It was four thirty in the afternoon, May 4, 1582. The action had taken two hours.

21

There are no further records of spiritual actions until November 15. Were the inquiries suspended for six months or are there records that are now missing? In his private diary Dee records ‘May 4, Mr Talbot went.’ He does not say where he went or why, whether it was a brief journey or a final departure.

Nor does he say in what state of mind Talbot went. Having refused to scry any more, Talbot had then taken part in that long, two hour action, that showed the two of them yoked together in divine work. But that same day he left.

An entry in the diary for two days later, May 6, has been partially erased and is difficult to read. Dee records that his wife Jane was ‘in a marvellous rage at eight o’clock at night, and all that night, and next morning till eight o’clock, melancholic and choleric terribly for the cozening ... some used that come to me as honest and learned men ... by Mr Clerkson’s brother was directed.’ It was Mr Clerkson who had first introduced Talbot to Dee and mention of him here might suggest that Talbot’s departure was in some way related to Jane’s marvellous rage. This is uncertain because crucial words have been erased from the diary, but that very erasure points to Talbot. There is a further erasure in the entry for May 29: ‘I understood of Ed Talbot his wicked nature and his abominable lies,’ and another for July 16: ‘I have confirmed that Talbot was a cozener.’ It seems more likely that Talbot made these erasures than that Dee did. It also indicates that Talbot at some point returned in order to erase these entries.

On July 13 Talbot comes and goes for the last time. ‘Mr Talbot came about three of the clock after noon with whom I had some words of book dealing; who parted in friendly terms. He said that the Lord Morley had the Lord Mounteagle’s books. He promised me some of Dr Myniver’s books.’ Lord Mounteagle’s daughter Elizabeth had married Edward Parker, 10th Baron Morley, and it was presumably he who now had the books. Were these books of magic? Dr Myniver, it later emerges, was a specialist in magic.

Had the departure in May been another attempt to obtain Munteagle's books? Or had Talbot left off scrying and broken with Dee, enraged at the instruction to take a wife. Or had he followed the instruction and gone off to marry? And what of the instruction yoking Dee and Talbot together in future divine work? Whatever the answers, Talbot never appears again. But that need mean no more than that the person going by the name of Talbot now turns up called something else.

TWO : KELLY

1

The spiritual records resume on November 15, 1582, with *The Fourth Book of Mysteries*. They open in mystery: ‘after reconciliation with Kelly.’ It is their first mention of Kelly, yet reference to a reconciliation clearly means that this was not the first encounter with him. The private diary has an entry for November 10: ‘I received of E. Kelly his second letter.’ It has been partially erased. Beneath it, also partially erased, is written, apparently in Kelly’s hand, ‘Which before ... by the name of Talbot.’

From now on the scribe is always referred to as E. K, not E. T. Mysterious extra-terrestrial is displaced by the letters of the mysterious unknown commentator on Edmund Spenser’s *The Shepherd’s Calendar*. But is this anything more than the change of a letter? Were Edward Talbot and Edward Kelly in fact the same person? Was Talbot the name Kelly went under when he first attempted to entrap Dee into dealing with wicked spirits? Apparently so. It was a name that would pass as French, an appropriate name for an undercover Roman Catholic priest, or a priest-informer, or someone pretending to be a priest, with French connections. Later Kelly claimed to be Irish and Kelly was of course an Irish name. The historical records spell it in two ways, Kelly and Kelley, naturally enough in a narrative of ambiguity. It is standardized here to Kelly. Was Kelly the name he took when he married? Or his real name that he reverted to? The Talbot that he dispensed with was a common name for an inn, taken from the hunting dog, white with occasional black spots. Worcester has two Talbots, old and new, and I have drunk in both often enough.

Edward Kelly was born at Worcester on August 1, 1555. Dee records the date and place in a horoscope that he drew up of Kelly’s nativity. It was the same year that Dee’s second wife was born. Both birth dates are retrospectively recorded in the margins of the almanac Dee used for his private diary.

April 22, Jane Fromond born at Cheam at noon.

August 1, Ed Kelly born at the fourth hour after noon, as his father left recorded.

At some point Dee gave Kelly a copy of an octavo Bible printed by Robert Stephens in 1555. It is the only book Dee records giving to Kelly. The coincidence of its publication date and Kelly’s birth date surely lay behind the gift, whatever other hope for moral guidance may have been implied.

Parish records show that Edward Kelly, son of Patrick Kelly, was christened on August 2, 1555 at St Swithin’s church, Worcester, the main city church. He had a sister Elizabeth, born in

1558, and a brother Thomas. Thomas later joined Dee's household and Dee records his birth date in the diary, October 17, 1565, also at Worcester at four in the afternoon. And Dee records too the date of Edward Kelly's wife's birth: June 23, 1563, Jane Cooper, now Mrs Kelly, toward evening.' She is usually referred to as Joan, or Joanna, in subsequent records.

Not much is known of Kelly before he met Dee. Lenglet du Fresnoy claimed in 1742 that Kelly was a notary in London, but there is no documentary evidence of this. Elias Ashmole recorded in 1675 that the astrologer 'Mr Lilly told me that John Evans who first taught him astrology informed him that he was acquainted with Kelly's sister in Worcester, and that she showed him some of the gold her brother had transmuted and that Kelly was first an apothecary in Worcester.'

The awful tedium of those Worcester summer days when the heat lay heavy and the sky darkened and everything was still except the fly-catcher on the roof darting around for moths and beetles, and the gulls wheeled around aimlessly miles from the sea.

Ten miles south of Worcester is Upton-upon-Severn. Dee was given the rectory there in 1553, and it was one of his basic sources of income. There is no record that he ever went there; the parish provided a living, but he felt no obligation to live in it. He may have visited Worcester, though. His library contained a copy of Aethicus Ister's *Cosmographia* given him, he noted inside it, by John Pedder, a dean at Worcester Cathedral, on February 21, 1566.

2

There is a story that Kelly was at university at Oxford, but it has not been substantiated. Anthony à Wood records in *Athenæ Oxoniensis* that Kelly 'being about seventeen years of age, at which time he had attained to a competency of grammar learning at Worcester and elsewhere, was sent to Oxford, but to what house I cannot tell. However, I have been informed by an ancient bachelor of divinity who in his younger years had been an amanuensis to Mr Thomas Allen of Gloucester Hall, that he (Kelly) had spent some time in that house; whereupon I, recurring to the matriculation, could not find the name of Kelly, only Talbot of Ireland, three of which name were students there in 1573, 74, etc ... This relation being somewhat dubiously delivered to me, I must tell you that Kelly having an unsettled mind, left Oxon abruptly, without being entered into the matricula.' Gloucester Hall was the original of what is now Worcester College. The absence of a record of matriculation is not in itself decisively negative evidence: there are many such absences in the records of people known to have been undergraduates. And it may be that Edward Kelly was enrolled at Gloucester Hall under the name of Talbot. There is a record for a Thomas Kelly, who may have been his

younger brother, matriculating at Jesus College, Oxford in April 1582.

The awful tedium of those Oxford, etc.

A misreading of Anthony à Wood's text seems to lie behind the claim that Kelly had been an amanuensis to Thomas Allen. It was Wood's informant who was the amanuensis. The information was that Kelly was a member of Gloucester Hall, Oxford. That he was servant to the famous mathematician, occultist, hermetic philosopher, or whatever he was, Allen, seems to be a fiction of language. Language misread.

3

And then Kelly is reported in Lancashire. In his *Ancient Funeral Monuments* of 1631 John Weever cites Lucan and Chaucer on the technique of raising the dead for spiritual prophecy. He then tells a story of Kelly.

'This diabolical questioning of the dead, for the knowledge of future accidents, was put in practice by the foresaid Kelly; who, upon a certain night, in the park of Walton-in-le-dale, in the county of Lancaster, with one Paul Waring (his fellow companion in such deeds of darkness) invoked some one of the infernal regiment to know certain passages in the life, as also what might be known by the devil's foresight, of the manner and time of the death of a noble young gentleman, as then in his wardship. The black ceremonies of that night being ended, Kelly demanded of one of the gentleman's servants, what corpse was the last buried in Law churchyard, a church thereunto adjoining, who told him of a poor man that was buried there but the same day. He and the said Waring entreated this foresaid servant to go with them to the grave of the man so lately interred, which he did; and withal did help them to dig up the carcase of the poor caitiff, whom by their incantations, they made him (or rather some evil spirit through his organs) to speak, who delivered strange predictions concerning the said gentleman.

'I was told thus much by the said serving man, a secondary actor in that dismal abhorred business, and divers gentlemen, and others, are now living in Lancashire to whom he has related this story. And the gentleman himself (whose memory I am bound to honour) told me a little before his death of this conjuration by Kelly; as he had it by relation from his said servant and tenant; only some circumstances excepted, which he thought not fitting to come to his master's knowledge.'

4

Ashmole said he had 'good and sound reasons' for doubting the story but what they were

are not known. Weever's account was published nearly fifty years after Kelly was last in England. But Weever was born in Lancashire in the mid 1570s and had strong regional connections there, so he may have had good sources of information. Kelly seems to have had some Lancashire connections. Dee's diary records an intended visit to Lancaster by Kelly (as Talbot) in search of some mysterious books of Lord Mouteagle's.

According to the authors of *The Shakespeare Conspiracy*, as a result of the graveyard episode 'Kelly was hauled before the local squire Thomas Langton. Fortunately, Langton was a friend of Lord Strange, whose father, as Earl of Derby, was Lord Lieutenant of the County. Strange intervened to free Kelly and the two men became occult colleagues. Strange was infatuated by Kelly's unholy activities, and soon the pair were experimenting with alchemy.' No evidence is given for this story, and it is unlikely that Weever would not have mentioned a court appearance if there had been one. Lord Strange is regularly associated with Catholic conspiracies and occultism, and it has more than once been claimed that Kelly had some connection with him: but no evidence has been produced.

Weever begins his account, 'Kelly (otherwise called Talbot) that famous English alchemist of our times, who flying out of his own country (after he had lost both his ears at Lancaster) was entertained with Rudolf the second, and last of that Christian name, Emperor of Germany.'

The cropping of ears was a standard judicial punishment in Tudor England. No contemporary record has been discovered of what crime Kelly was alleged to have committed, or of the execution of such a sentence. Forging title deeds and coining are often mentioned in later accounts, but no supporting evidence has ever been produced. In 1593 the Emperor Rudolf asked information from Christopher Parkins in Prague about the reason for the 'diminishing' of one of Kelly's ears, but whatever Parkins told the Emperor he does not record. Weever may have exaggerated in having both ears lopped, just as later commentators exaggerate in having Kelly regularly digging up corpses. Only one corpse is reported to have been disinterred, and only one ear is said to have been lopped.

It is surprising that Kelly achieved ready acceptance by Dee, and a succession of European rulers and noblemen, if he bore the mark of a convicted malefactor. Some later commentators have claimed that Kelly concealed the disfigurement by always wearing a close fitting skull cap, or alternatively, long hair, but again there are no known contemporary comments on that. It is Dee who wears a skull cap in contemporary and later portraits.

Was Kelly's punishment meted out after he had been in Dee's service some time, or before they met? Weever seems to imply it was immediately after the punishment that Kelly

left England, by which time he and Dee had been collaborating for some eighteen months.

There are certainly mysteries. If Talbot is now to be known as Kelly, why is that nowhere remarked in Dee's records? Yet if Kelly is someone else, why is the arrival of a new scryer nowhere remarked? Does the resumption of the actions 'after reconciliation with Kelly' refer to a reconciliation after those 'words of unkindness' from Talbot four months earlier? Talbot had refused to continue to deal with the spirits. Kelly was to refuse time and again. Five years later, April 17, 1587, when the spiritual transactions were coming to an end, Dee remarked how 'Uriel was the first which appeared to the joining of E. K. and me together.' This would seem to confirm the identification of Talbot with Kelly: the first spirit to appear when Talbot scryed was Uriel. Nonetheless Dee's absence of comment on the transmutation of Talbot into Kelly is mysterious. Or was he so concerned with angelic mysteries that mere earthly mysteries were of no significance, indeed were not even mysteries to him, but mysteries to us only because of the absence of comment?

That John Weever could write in 1631 of 'Kelly (otherwise known as Talbot)' is also mysterious. He is the first commentator to make this identification, and there were no published records he could have drawn on at this date. It is possible to deduce from Dee's diary and spiritual transactions that Talbot was Kelly but Dee's diary was not published until 1842. Meric Casaubon published some of Dee and Kelly's spiritual transactions in 1659, but he was not aware of the earlier materials dealing with the scryer under the name of Talbot; those manuscripts were lost until Elias Ashmole acquired them in 1672. Weever's identification of Talbot with Kelly seems to be from some now unknown personal or anecdotal source.

5

The spiritual transactions continued, sometimes not especially spiritual. One November evening, Dee records, after drinking at night around eight o'clock he requested spirit 'to help me with some portion of hidden treasure to pay my debts and to buy necessary things etc.'

'Oh, worldling, you shall be satisfied with wealth of this world. Behold, behold, behold, lo, lo, behold, vehemently I say behold, I have hoarded up treasure for the son of perdition, the first instrument of his destruction. But lo, these caves ...'

Kelly was shown the caverns of the earth and the secret places thereof. 'Mark this, all spirits living within the earth where their habitation is of force not of will except the midst of myself which I do not know, are subject to the power of this.' Then, pointing to his seal, he said, 'With this you shall govern, with this you shall unlock, with this in his name who reigns you shall discover her entrails. What do you say now? Can you do it? Are your magicians not

acquainted with me? It grieves me to register the bones of the wicked. Praise him Butmono, praise him Butmono, praise him.'

'Is that your name?' asked Dee, politely.

'Yes, it is my name,' he said. 'It is the end of all the things.'

There was no hidden treasure immediately forthcoming. Dee remained struggling with his debts.

6

Much of the activity consisted of assembling tables of letters and numbers, tables of the names of the powers that ruled over the various parts of the creation, over the days of the week and the regions of the earth. There were tables that were charts. There was a round table with letters and numbers which Kelly gave to Dee. There was the four square wooden table, the Holy Table or Table of Practice, made according to the instructions of the spiritual creatures, its surface inscribed with letters and symbols. And there were tables of letters and names assembled by spiritual dictation. November 17 they were told, 'You have forty-nine names in those tables. Those names you have in previous tables written by you, in that of seven times seven. Confer it with the round table. The first letter from the point of his sword is B. That B signifies the number of the Bs beginning the forty-nine names environing that circle. In the former tables you shall find B 1, B 2, B 3, B 4 etc and so to B 49. Those Bs begin the names of all the powers that have governed, do govern and shall govern. The next letter has its circle and members going round about it, which you will find in the former tables. The letter stands in the middle of every square or every circle, though some are turned upside down, which only signifies that they are spirits of destruction, wrath and indignation in God's judgement. There are two numbers; that on the right hand, over the letter, is the number pertaining to that letter. O in the circumference is the ninth letter. Gather together the former tables which you made before, containing forty-nine, depending only on B, where you shall find Bobogel, a name consisting of seven letters, and so the rest. Read my instructions concerning those tables and you will find the truth of them. I have said.'

But there was still more to be said. 'My charge is not of myself, neither do I speak darkly, obscurely or without truth, in affirming that I taught you those tables, for they are from him who made and created all things.

'Behold you desire and are sick with desire. I am the disposer though not the composer of God's medicine. You desire to be comforted and strengthened in your labours. I minister unto the strength of God. What I say is not of myself, nor is that which is said to me of themselves,

but it is said of him who lives for ever. These mysteries has God lastly and of his great mercies granted to you. I have answered your doubting mind. You shall be glutted, yea filled, yea you shall swell and be puffed up with the perfect knowledge of God's mysteries in his mercies. Abuse them not, be faithful. Use mercy. God shall enrich you. Banish wrath; it was the first and is the greatest commandment.'

It was all very splendid and moving and mysterious, and so enigmatic.

'I pray you make some of these last instructions more plain and evident,' implored Dee.

'I have shown you perfectly. Behold I teach you again ...'

And off again went the instructions. 'You have forty-two letters. Your last tables contain so many. Every letter is a name ...'

7

A spirit called Ho instructed them in the practical application of the power contained in the tables.

'When you will work for anything appertaining to the estate of a good king, you must first call upon him who is their prince. Secondly, the ministers of his power are six, whose names contain seven letters apiece as your tables manifest, by whom generally, or by any one of them in particular, you shall work for any intent or purpose. As concerning the letters particularly they concern the names of forty-two, which forty-two in general or one of them do and can work the destruction, hindrance or annoyance of the estate, condition or degree both for the body as well as the government of any wicked or ill-living prince.

'If it rule worldly princes, how much more shall it work with the princes of creation? You desire use, I teach use, and yet the art is to the further understanding of all sciences that are past, present or yet to come. Fruit has a further virtue than only in the eating: gold its further condition, property and quality than in melting or common use.'

'If I would have the King of Spain's heart to be inclined to the purpose I have in hand,' said Dee, 'what shall I do?'

'First cast your eye to the general prince, governor or angel that is principal in this world.'

Baligon or Carmara, Dee noted.

'Secondly, consider the circumstances of your instruction. Thirdly, place my name, which you have already. Fourthly, of him who was shown you yesterday whose garments were short and purple. Fifthly, his power with the rest of his six perfect ministers. With those you shall work to a good end. All the rest you may use to God's glory, for every one of them shall minister to your necessities.

‘Moreover, when you work, your feet must be placed upon those tables which you see written last comprehending forty-two letters and names. But with this consideration, that the first character which is the first of the seven in your former book, be placed upon the top of the table which you were and are and shall be commanded to have and use. Last of all, the ring which was appointed you, with the lamin comprehending the form of your own name, which is to be made in perfect gold, as was said before.

‘As concerning the use of these tables,’ Ho continued, ‘this is but the first step, neither shall you practice them in vain.’ And he assured Dee, ‘for the praise and advancement of God’s glory with Philip the Spanish king, I answer that whatever you shall speak, do or work, shall be profitable and accepted and the end of it shall be good.’

But he would not accept Dee’s excuses for not having had everything made as instructed.

‘You urge the absence of your friend as an excuse for the ring. No excuse can prevail. Neither can you show the fruits of a just mind but of a fainting stomach with this excuse. God has returned him and will be merciful to you both. Your charges in worldly affairs are not so great that God cannot minister help to their necessities.’

The absent friend whom God has returned is presumably the departed Talbot, returned as Kelly.

As far as Dee’s political involvements, Ho warned them, ‘Great care is to be had with those that meddle with princes’ affairs. Much more consideration with whom you shall meddle or use any practice. But God has shadowed you from destruction. He preserves his faithful and shadows the just with a shield of honour. None shall enter into the knowledge of these mysteries but this worker. Your estate with the prince now reigning shall shortly be amended, her favour increased with the goodwill of many that are now deceivers. Your hand shall shortly be their help and you shall achieve many wonderful benefits, to the augmenting of God’s glory, for your country. Finally, God enriches you with knowledge and has given you the understanding of these worldly vanities.’

8

There were certain indications of the presence of spirit. Dee recorded them as corroborating evidence, just as he sometimes queried the spirits about things they said that seemed contradictory or incorrect.

‘I feel: and, by a great thundering noise, thumming thumming in my ears, I perceive the presence of some spiritual creature about me.’

It was both an intuitive feeling and a physical perception.

‘And I hear the thumming,’ Kelly said.

The spirit spoke to them about the ambiguity of what they were about, that those feelings and perceptions would be open to deception. Not that they would imagine things that were not, but that ‘contrary powers’ would intrude and deceive them.

‘Before this work is finished,’ said Ho, ‘I mean the manifestation of these mysteries, you shall be troubled with the contrary powers, and beyond any accustomed manner. Take care they do not provoke you to work against our commandments. Both your eye and hand shall be manifest witness of it. Well, this is true.’

When the troubling was to come they were not told. Spiritual creatures have a different perception of time and their warnings might be for months or for years ahead, for as much as a decade or more.

9

Some of the visions in the show stone were like a parade of contemporary fashion.

‘They that now come in are jolly fellows all trimmed after the manner of nobility nowadays, with gilt rapiers, curled hair, and they bragged up and down. Bobogel stands in a black velvet coat and his hose close, round hose of velvet upper stocks overlaid with gold lace. He has a velvet hat with a black feather in it, with a cape on one of his shoulders, his purse hanging at his neck and so put under his girdle. His beard long. He has pantofels and pynsons.’

Pantofels were some sort of slippers or outdoor overshoes; pynsons were a thin shoe or slipper of some sort, though no contemporary description of them is known.

‘There are forty-two of them. Seven of them are apparelled like Bobogel, sagely and gravely. All the rest are like ruffians. Some are like to be men and women, for in the forepart they seemed women and in the back part men by their apparel. And these were the last seven. They danced, leaped and kissed. The stone is brighter where the sage and grave seven stand and where the others stand the stone is darker.

‘The first of the sage ones plucked up his right foot and under it appeared an L. Then the second moved his foot and E appeared. Under the third likewise, E.’

LEENARB was spelt out. Once again they were given lists of seven letter names.

The dictation continued in the next session, November 19. The letters appeared to Kelly and he told them to Dee, who began to write LEENARB.

‘You write in vain. You have written them already,’ said Ho.

‘It is true,’ said Dee. ‘I see them now, the last noted down below.’

Were these correlations a mark of spiritual consistency? Or if Kelly was faking it had he

looked at the notes of the previous session and repeated the letters? But why would he do that? What increase in credibility would that provide?

‘I am true philosophy,’ Bobogel came and told them. ‘I am true understanding. Oh my descending from him who reigns is even incomprehensible to the angels. Neither do I know myself. But what I think I utter, and what I measure I am.’

And what could be more mysterious than that?

10

Dee struggled with comprehending the messages. He notes at one point, ‘Here I found a certain error in my writing of the first notes which I since amended in writing this. But while that error troubled me, the spiritual creature said these words, “The fault is in E. K.’s remembering and not in his will.”’

At another time, he records, ‘I craved for some plainer instruction.’

‘Are your eyes so blind?’ said Ho. ‘Do you see and will not see? Your mind tells you. Your understanding furthers you and your judgement establishes it. As you saw a body in three places and of three compositions though but two in form, so shall this work have relation to time present and present use, to mysteries far exceeding it, and finally to a purpose and intent by which the majesty and name of God shall and may and necessarily must appear with the apparition of his wonders and marvels yet unheard of. I have spoken.’

11

There were always doubts and dangers, doubts of misunderstanding and obscurity, dangers of the intrusion of evil spirits. November 20 Dee noted of the action, ‘I seemed to doubt of some matter here.’

‘You shall be answered in any doubt. I am your friend. I have favoured you in many things. Others have imagined vainly of my name. For your love towards me you shall know my name. I was with Solomon. I was also, unknown, with Scotus. I was in respect of my power: unknown in respect of my name. He called me Mares. Since then I was not with any. And I preserved you from the power of the wicked, when I told you things of truth to come. When I rid your house of wicked ones and was with you in extremities, I was with you, I was with you thoroughly.’

Then he told Kelly to ask if Dee knew Obelison.

‘I had to do with Obelison,’ Dee admitted, ‘but by reason of my scryer’s naughtiness, I was in doubt what I might credit.’

‘Naughtiness’ had a much more serious meaning then than it does now.

‘You shall know this for a most manifest truth hereafter. I am Obelison, the fifth of the seventh which have the scourging of Obelison the wicked: but not wicked for ever, neither accursed to the end. We angels have times and our faults are amended.’

‘Shall I note your name by Befafes?’ Dee asked.

‘My name is so indeed. The Egyptians called me Obelison in respect of my nature.’

‘What is the etymology of Obelison?’ Dee asked.

‘A pleasant deliverer.’

12

The Fourth Book of Mysteries ended with the consultations on Wednesday November 21, 1582. The session began at seven in the evening and involved complex instructions on using the tables of angelic names. And then after the instructions had come to an end and the black cloth was let down in the stone to mark the end of the proceedings, Ho delivered a spiritual gift.

‘One thing is yet wanting,’ said Ho. ‘A fitting receptacle. There is yet wanting a stone. One there is, most excellent, hid in the secret of the depth, in the uttermost part of the Roman possession. Write. All praise, glory and honour be unto him who reigns for ever, amen. Be of good comfort. The mighty hand of God is upon you. You shall have it. You shall have it. You shall have it. Do you see? Look but do not stir from your place.’

Kelly pointed.

‘I do not see it,’ said Dee.

‘It is sanctified, blessed and dignified in the use of his creatures,’ Ho told them. ‘You shall prevail with it with kings and with all creatures of the world, whose beauty in virtue shall be worth more than the kingdoms of the earth. Look, if you see. But do not stir, for the angel of his power is present.’

Dee records, E. K. looked toward my west window and saw there first upon the mats by my books a thing, to his thinking, as big as an egg, most bright, clear and glorious, and an angel of the height of a little child holding up the same thing in his hand towards me, and that angel had a fiery sword in his hand.

‘Go towards it and take it up,’ said Ho.

I went toward the place which E. K. pointed to and till I came within two foot of it I saw nothing, and then I saw like a shadow on the ground or mats hard by my books under the west window. The shadow was roundish and less than the palm of my hand. I put my hand down upon it and I felt a thing cold and hard, which taking up I perceived to be the stone mentioned

before.

‘Keep it sincerely,’ said Ho, ‘truth in truth, God in God, one in one. Let no mortal hand touch it but your own. Praise God.’

13

After this gift of the stone in November 1582 there are no records of further spiritual conversations for four months. The private diary records that the day after the gift, November 22, ‘E. K. went to London, and so the next day travelled by road toward Blockley, and within eight or ten days to return.’ But there is no indication that he did return until March. Blockley was in the Cotswolds, between Oxford and Chipping Norton.

Two days after Kelly left Dee had a disturbing dream. ‘Saturday night I dreamed that I was dead, and afterwards my bowels were taken out. I walked and talked with various people and among others with the Lord Treasurer who was come to my house to burn my books when I was dead, and thought he looked sourly on me.’

Dee was never sure about his relationship with the Lord Treasurer, William Cecil, Lord Burghley. Now in his early sixties, Burghley was a cold, saturnine character, even known as ‘old Saturnus.’ ‘No man can be accounted happy in this world that is not wise, and he that is wisest sees most his own unhappiness,’ he once remarked. He ran efficient surveillance networks at home and abroad together with Walsingham.

Burghley commissioned Dee to investigate the reform of the calendar and this was one of the projects that occupied him while Kelly was away. The cumulative errors of the Julian character were known to mathematicians but any change involved confronting religious interests. Pope Leo X had attempted a reform with the assistance of Copernicus in 1514. But changes were not finally made in the Roman Catholic world until February 24, 1582, when Pope Gregory XIII ordered their implementation. That year October 4 was followed by October 15. Dee preferred to calculate from the date of Christ’s birth rather than from the Council of Nicea and so recommended eleven days rather than ten should be omitted if the change was to be strictly accurate. He was hopeful his advice would be taken seriously.

His political standing was as high as it had ever been. February 11, 1583 he recorded in his diary ‘The Queen lying at Richmond went to Mr Secretary Walsingham to dinner; she coming by my door graciously called me to her, and so I went by her horse’s side as far as where Mr Hudson dwelt. Her Majesty asked me obscurely of Monsieur’s state: dixi biothanatos erit.’ The last sentence was written in Greek characters, which Dee used for the more confidential diary entries. ‘Monsieur’ was the code name for Catherine de Medici’s son the Duc d’Anjou,

formerly the Duc d'Alençon, heir to the French throne, who was wooing Elizabeth. Dee told her the duke was destined for a violent death. Widely believed to be syphilitic, by the following year he was dead from typhoid fever. Leicester, Walsingham, Pembroke and Hatton strongly opposed the marriage proposal; Burghley, Sussex and Oxford supported it.

'I delivered my book to the Lord Treasurer for the correction of the calendar,' Dee records on February 26, 1583.

'I have perused Mr Dee's book concerning his opinion for the reformation of the old Roman calendar,' Burghley wrote to his son, Robert Cecil. 'And I have conferred also by speech with him at good length. I am not skilful in the theoricks to discern the points and minutes; but yet I am inclined to think him in the right line.'

'It were good, in my opinion,' Burghley suggested 'that by her Majesty's order some skilful men in this science, as Mr Digges and others, to be called out of the universities, might peruse his work, and confer the thing by speech. And though he discovers the ten days to be insufficient, yet he yields, for conformity with the rest of the world, to assent to the reformation of our English calendar with the abridgment of ten days only, so as the truth be announced to the world, that it ought to be eleven days, hoping that the truth will draw the Romanists, and the other parts of Christendom, to take out of their calendar hereafter the same odd day. There appears great cause to have this conference accelerated, for that it is requisite for a secret matter to be reformed before November.'

What the secret matter was is not known. Did it involve Dee? Were plans already afoot for him? Before November he was out of the country.

In the meantime the committee met and resolved to do nothing. It conceded that the change would be convenient for those engaged in commerce, but that would not compensate for the confusion created with existing almanacs. Moreover, to conform to the revisions would look like subservience to Roman Catholicism: the reformed system, after all, was already known as the Gregorian calendar after the current pope who had implemented it, Gregory XIII. Dee was bitterly disappointed. England remained out of phase with Europe for the next 160 years.

Dee had other meetings with important political figures at this time.

January 23, 1583, 'the Right Honourable Mr Secretary Walsingham came to my house, where by good luck he found Mr Adrian Gilbert, and so talk was begun of North-West straits discovery.'

‘January 24, I, Mr Adrian Gilbert, and John Davis went by appointment to Mr Secretary to Mr Beale’s house, where only we four were served, and we made Mr Secretary privy of the North-West passage, and all charts and rutters were agreed upon in general.’

‘February 18, the Lady Walsingham came suddenly on me in my house very freely, and after that she was gone came Sir Francis himself and Mr Dyer.’

‘March 6, I and Mr Adrian Gilbert and John Davis did meet with Mr Alderman Barnes, Mr Towrson and Mr Yong and Mr Hudson about the North-West voyage.’

Sir Francis Walsingham, Secretary of State, was one of the most powerful politicians in England. He was a neighbour of Dee’s, leasing a house at Barn Elms, near Barnes. Burghley’s protégé, he had taken over and developed the intelligence network of agents that Burghley had established and in which he still maintained an interest. It was a secret service that reached throughout England and Europe. Walsingham’s particular concern was monitoring Catholic plots. King Henry VIII had broken with the Roman Catholic church only fifty years earlier. The church’s property had been seized by the state and sold to wealthy landowners and lawyers. The possibility that the absolutist Catholic monarchies of Spain or France might support an invasion of England to restore Roman Catholicism filled property owners and Protestant parliamentary politicians with terror. After all, who knew where the ultimate loyalties, religious or political, of the English people lay?

Walsingham’s network and interests reached widely, both at home and abroad. The discussions he was now having with Dee included the possibilities of discovering the fabled North-West passage, a hypothetical sea route to China across the north of America, and Sir Humphrey Gilbert’s scheme to settle the new world. The marriage of Walsingham’s daughter Frances to Philip Sidney, which had been agreed upon in February, may also have been on the agenda. Walsingham’s preoccupation with the perceived Catholic threat to Protestant England was something that underlay his interest in Gilbert’s voyage of settlement and exploration. In 1578 Sir Humphrey Gilbert had secured letters patent from Queen Elizabeth for establishing an English colony in the new world, and he made an exploratory voyage that year. By 1582 he was still having difficulty raising sufficient money for the project. He then became involved with Sir Thomas Gerard, a committed Catholic, and Sir George Peckham, a Catholic sympathiser, and granted them lands in America in return for financial contributions to the expedition.

The Spanish Ambassador, Bernadino de Mendoza, found out about the project and reported back to King Philip II of Spain.

‘Humphrey Gilbert was fitting out ships to gain a foothold in Florida, and in order to make

this not only prejudicial to your Majesty's interests, but also damaging to Catholics here, while benefiting the heretics, Walsingham approached indirectly two Catholic gentlemen, whose estates had been ruined, intimating to them that if they would help Gilbert's expedition, their lives and liberties might be saved, and the Queen might be asked in consideration of their service to let them settle in Florida, enjoying freedom of conscience and their property in England, to which end they might engage the intercession of Philip Sidney. Since they wished to live as Catholics, without danger to their lives, they found it a good proposal and they told other Catholics, who also approved of it and offered financial aid to the enterprise. Petitions were presented to the Queen, and she granted them a patent under the Great Seal of England to colonize Florida on the banks of the river Norombega where they are to be allowed to live as their conscience chooses, and enjoy those revenues they possess in England.'

Walsingham clearly saw the scheme as a way of getting rid of potentially dangerous Catholics from England, without causing them to settle in countries hostile to England. Indeed the whole idea may well have been Walsingham's own, with Sidney acting as his intermediary.

Peckham consulted Dee about the project in July 1582. Dee's researches on Madoc, the Welsh prince said to have discovered America in 1170, were used to bolster up these British claims to North America.

Dee had been consulted on such matters, navigational, legal and historical, for the previous thirty years. He had advised Sebastian Cabot on the search for a North-Eastern route to China to find new markets for English woollen manufactures. In the last hundred years England had moved from exporting untreated wool to Flanders to being the foremost manufacturer of woollen products in Europe. Cabot's company never reached China but they did open up trade with Moscow and establish a new route to Persia. Martin Frobisher had consulted Dee on a North-West passage in the 1570s; he did not find it, but he came back with an Eskimo and some ore that looked like gold, but turned out not to be. It was the beginning of the British Empire, a phrase that Dee was one of the first to use.

In 1580 Dee had delivered to Queen Elizabeth at Richmond two rolls establishing her title to various foreign lands. He provided the imaginative legal and historical documentation, though Burghley, Dee felt, was sceptical. But it was all part of a legitimization of trading activity and colonial expansion.

Dee was not only an adviser on such projects. At various times his name features as a financial beneficiary of them. The potential profit of these enterprises was phenomenal.

In September 1580 Dee had entered into an agreement with Sir Humphrey Gilbert that granted Dee rights to all the newly discovered land north of the 50th parallel in America.

In February 1584 Adrian Gilbert, Humphrey's brother, received a patent from the Queen for the discovery of a 'North-West and North-Eastward or Northward' passage to the East, with rights to trade and settle in any country encountered on the way.

Amongst the English State papers is a draft of 'the substance of the grant desired by the discoverer of the North-West parts,' with Dee named as one of the principals along with Adrian Gilbert and John Davis.

'That Adrian Gilbert has travailed and still travails at great charge to discover the north-west parts of Atlantis, called Novus Orbis, not hitherto discovered by any Christian but him.

'That his purpose is to win the people there to the knowledge of God and open a profitable traffic.

'That the Queen shall license him and his associates to leave the realm, with ships, men, armour etc for any parts between the equinoctial and the North pole, and enjoy all places he may discover with all royalties therein.

'That they shall yield her one fifth of all gold, silver, pearls etc that they meet with.

'That they shall hold the said lands for ever, by homage to her Majesty, and by the said fifth part.

'If any other traffic thither, their ship and goods to be confiscated, half to Adrian and half to her Majesty, to be sued for by him in the name of "the colleagues of the fellowship of new navigations, Atlantical and Septentrional," by which name they are to be incorporated.

'That they have power to make laws and decrees in those countries, provided they are not contrary to the laws here established.

'That Gilbert, John Dee and John Davis, the chief travaillers therein, be exempted for ever from all customs on exports or imports, provided they cover the goods of no others.

'That Adrian may punish mutiny according to justice by the verdict of twelve men.'

When Dee left England before the plans were finalized, his place in the agreement was taken by Sir Walter Raleigh, Adrian Gilbert's half-brother.

It was the plans for these expeditions that occupied Dee in early 1583, and his private diary records continual meetings with explorers, seamen and political figures. If Dee's land rights could be successfully exploited, his financial problems would be permanently solved. Then he could devote himself to his spiritual inquiries. But there is no evidence that any of these schemes ever generated any profit for him.

Philip Sidney was more successful. He had a share in Sir Humphrey Gilbert's project, entitling him to thirty hundred thousand acres, which he sold to Sir George Peckham in July 1583 to raise the cash to marry Walsingham's daughter. At some later point Sidney even considered sailing to the new world himself. There is no suggestion that Dee was ever tempted. In the end Sir Humphrey Gilbert was drowned on his ill-fated expedition. The scheme to settle Florida with Catholics came to nothing. Adrian Gilbert's project to discover the North-West passage finally set sail under the command of John Davis in 1585, and Davis set out on further expeditions in 1586 and 1587. Various places were named after Davis and his associates – Davis Sound, Gilbert Sound, Mount Raleigh, Cape Dyer, Cape Walsingham – but the North-West passage was never found.

And by that time Dee was in foreign parts himself, pursuing other dreams and schemes of wealth, no less illusory.

THREE : SCROLL, BOOK AND POWDER

1

Midday March 18, 1583, Dee received a message from Lord Laski, a Polish aristocrat. Laski visited England two months later. It was a visit that was to change Dee's life. For Kelly the changes were even greater, both more marvellous and ultimately disastrous. The private diary records: 'Mr North from Poland, after he had been with the Queen he came to me. I received salutation from Alaski, Palatine in Poland; salutation by Mr North who came before to the Queen, and next to me was his message.'

2

There had been no mention of Kelly in Dee's diaries or spiritual records since he left for Blockley in November, four months earlier. But within four days of Laski's message to Dee, Kelly was back in Mortlake with some mysterious discoveries. The following day he and Dee consulted the spirits.

'E. K. being come with Mr John Husey of Blockley (on the 22nd day of March) and E. K. being desirous to understand somewhat of our spiritual friends as concerning such matter as had fallen out very strange to him and Mr Husey, about a certain muniment of a book and a scroll found in Northwick hill by the direction and leading of such a spiritual creature, as when they had gotten the same, and they endeavoured by art to have some exposition of the scroll, written in strange characters, they were willed to repair to me and there they should be answered, etc., which thing now they did.'

It is not clear whether the discoveries were actually made at Blockley, or simply that John Husey came from there. Blockley is a small town in the Cotswolds, at that time in the county and diocese of Worcester. It lies north of Chipping Norton, where Kelly's wife was born, on the Worcester-Oxford-London road. With its several springs of fresh water and its fast flowing brook that powered a dozen mills, it was a prosperous town in the wool trade. Northwick hill is a mile or so to the north of the town. But there is also a Northwick just north of Worcester, Kelly's birthplace.

A muniment was a manuscript record. The manuscript book was *The Book of Dunstan*, an alchemical treatise ascribed to St Dunstan, the tenth century bishop of Worcester. He was also a bishop of London and Canterbury, abbot of Glastonbury and reputedly an alchemist.

They also found a powder with the manuscript and the scroll but Kelly seems not to have immediately revealed its existence to Dee. The powder was, Dee and Kelly later established,

the alchemical elixir.

Later in the records Dee notes that the powder was found 'at the digging in England.' Was this a mine or a quarry? Or had they actually dug and found something hidden?

3

In later years various other stories of the acquisition of the powder and the manuscript circulated. Elias Ashmole wrote in *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* (1652) that Dee and Kelly 'were so strangely fortunate, as to find a very large quantity of the elixir in some part of the ruins of Glastonbury abbey.' But this was written before Ashmole had acquired the manuscript of the first part of the spiritual records, in which the discovery is recorded.

Another account was given in 1742 by Nicolas Lenglet du Fresnoy in his *History of Hermetic Philosophy*. He writes that Kelly was originally a lawyer in London, though no documentary evidence of this has ever been produced. Convicted of forging ancient title deeds, Kelly had his ears cropped and was banished from the city. He headed for the Welsh marches where he put up at an inn. (In the later nineteenth century accounts by Louis Figuier and A. E. Waite it has become 'a lonely hostelry in the mountains.') There fate delivered into his hands an old book, written in Welsh. Kelly was proficient in the language. It dealt with the transmutation of metals. As he sought to penetrate its mysteries, he asked the innkeeper where the book came from. He was told that it had been found in the sepulchre of an ancient bishop interred in a neighbouring church. This tomb had been opened during one of those outbursts of religious fanaticism in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, when the English Protestants broke images and exercised their empty cruelty even on the ashes of the dead.

The sepulchre of the bishop had been opened because it was believed that this prelate had died extremely rich and treasure would be found in his tomb. But instead of riches, only the book, already mentioned, and two small ivory caskets were discovered. Out of spite at finding nothing else, the violators of the tomb broke one of the caskets, which was found to be hollow and filled with a powder, very red and very heavy though without any odour. The innkeeper, more curious than the others, perhaps with no other reason than this curiosity, took possession of the book and the second ivory casket, which was full of white powder. Some of the red powder survived, which he took charge of, knowing neither its use nor its worth.

The nineteenth century accounts add that the book, casket and powder were exchanged for a flagon of wine, and that the manuscript was retained as a curiosity to be exhibited to strangers frequenting the hostelry. For a long time the intact casket was a plaything for the innkeeper's children. But Kelly, alerted by the book, offered one pound sterling to the innkeeper, who was

delighted to receive this amount, however modest, for objects which were useless to him. Kelly had no sooner acquired this treasure than he returned secretly to the inner suburbs of London from where he wrote to John Dee, his old neighbour and friend, telling him of his adventure. The story has no credibility.

Dee and Kelly consulted about the discovery, but nothing very clear emerged. 'Being therefore now ready to receive instructions from our friends,' Dee records, 'there appeared in the stone one in a fool's coat, going about a cloud, which appeared first in the stone. I charged him if he were the enemy of God to depart. He tore all his clothes and appeared all hairy underneath.'

'Glorify God and depart,' Dee ordered him.

He went away as if it had been a brush of feathers pulled in pieces.

But though the spiritual friends then delivered spiritual truths – the way, the truth and the strength are one and multiple and marvellous is his magnitude – nothing especially pertinent to the mysterious book and scroll was delivered.

'What do you wish to have?' Medicina asked.

'True wisdom.'

'You have it.'

'I do not perceive it.'

Medicina showed a tree and a great deal of water at the root or bottom of it and said, 'Has this tree, now, any fruit?'

'I do not see it,' said Dee, 'but the scryer may say.'

'The water comes up the tree and it swells and it has fruit, great, fair and red,' said Kelly.

The tree with water around its foot and its great, fair and red solar fruit was an alchemical image.

'Lo, I eat it myself,' said Medicina, 'and it lights the heart of those that are chosen.'

He seems to eat, Kelly reported.

'So it is in you. Go and you shall receive. Tarry and you shall receive sleep and you shall see, but watch and your eyes shall be fully opened.'

They tried again the following day, Sunday, March 24 at about eight in the morning. Again there were the generalized instructions, the sonorous phrases, the spiritual truths. But eventually Dee directed attention to the scroll found at Northwick hill. He was convinced it was a treasure map, in code and symbolically represented. No doubt his desires for some discovery of treasure to dissolve his debts encouraged that interpretation.

5

Dee had written to Lord Burghley nine years earlier, October 3, 1574, about his lack of sufficient funds to pursue his work, and asking for the royal privilege of treasure trove. ‘The value of a mine is a matter for a king’s treasure. But a pot of two or three hundred pounds etc. hid in the ground, wall or tree is but the price of a good book or instrument for perspective, astronomy or some feat of importance. And truly vulgar, obscure persons, as hosiers and tanners can, by colour of seeking assays of metals for the say master enjoy liberty to content their fantasies to dig after dreamish demonstrations of places, etc. May not I, then, in respect of all the former allegations of my pains, cost and credit in matters philosophical and mathematical ...’

He asked ‘that her Majesty freely give unto me, by good warranty and assurance of her letters patents, her right and propriety to all treasure trove (and such things commodious as under that name and meaning comprised) by digging or search anywhere in her grace’s kingdoms and dominions, I, or my assigns shall come to or find.’

He asked for it for the term of his life and he offered half of the discoveries to Burghley.

Lately, he told Burghley, he had been approached by all sorts of people, ‘of which some by vehement, iterated dreams, some by vision (as they have thought), others by speech forced to their imagination by night, have been informed of certain places where treasure lies hidden.’

He had not followed up on these opportunities. That would have been illegal without royal licence. ‘I have always been contented to hear the histories, fantasies or illusions reported to me but never intermeddled according to the desire of such.’

But to let such opportunities slip by ...

And now Kelly had arrived with a treasure map. No doubt Kelly knew of Dee’s interest in buried treasure. Dee may have talked of his approach for a treasure trove licence – though Burghley’s response, if any, is not recorded. Was the scroll a real discovery? Real in the sense of authentic. A discovery in the sense of having been discovered. Or was it a bait of Kelly’s to keep Dee’s interest? Or was it a bait placed by someone else, using Kelly as an instrument, conscious or unconscious? Were they spiritual creatures or evil spirits or human agents at

work?

6

Sunday, March 24, 1583.

‘Is it your will to proceed in this matter now you have begun?’ Dee asked, ‘or will you say anything of these characters and places of hidden treasure, portrayed here by picture?’

The scroll had ten roundels, containing images of feathers, urns, pillars, chests and other mysterious shapes; within each circle were brief passages in a mysterious script, and there was also a sustained passage in the same script.

‘As you wish,’ said Medicina.

‘As the will of God is, so will I,’ said Dee. ‘You know the will of God better than I do.’

‘The eternal liquor be upon you. Once more, what do you wish?’

‘I prefer the heavenly liquor before all things, and desire to be bedewed with the supercelestial dew thereof.’

‘Consider the former tree,’ said Medicina.

‘The tree with water at the foot?’

‘You have said. His growing power brings forth act. Remember the prince and the subjects which have power, as you are told, of earthly bowels. The thing there which you desire from me is no part of my charge. Call him, it is his office.’

Blisdon is the prince under Bnaspol the king, Dee noted down; the proper spirit to call.

In a further note he records that later, in 1587, a certain Ben (a spiritual creature) said to E. K. that he was guardian of the powder and the book of Dunstan.

7

Tuesday, March 26, they asked about the treasure map again.

‘As concerning the characters and show of the ten places, we are desirous to know whether we may require now Bnaspol, or another under him, to say to us what may content us for the case as it stands with us.’

Medicina was not at all helpful. ‘The builder of the temple was rich before it was adorned. With wisdom came the instruments necessary for man’s worldly use.

‘I told you before that my feet are not placed upon such brittle and crackling sand, neither are my lips occupied with the vanity of nothing. I will not manifest, in any point, the thing which you desire, neither is it any part of my charge.’

Another set of tables and twenty mysterious characters were dictated. They were given the

pronunciation of the characters and their roman letter equivalents. But these were not in the same script as the characters on the treasure map.

8

Dee tried asking about his other hope for financial reward, the North-West passage project. There had been a strange event the previous day when Adrian Gilbert had visited. Gilbert, a prime mover in the project, was a chymist – an alchemist – and a member of the group around the Sidneys. Mary Sidney had married Henry Herbert, 2nd Earl of Pembroke, in 1577. ‘In her time Wilton House was like a college, there were so many learned and ingenious persons,’ John Aubrey records. ‘She was the greatest patroness of wit and learning of any lady in her time. She was a great chymist, and spent yearly a great deal in that study. She kept for her laborator in the house Adrian Gilbert (vulgarly called Dr Gilbert), half-brother to Sir Walter Raleigh, who was a great chymist in those days and a man of excellent natural parts; but very sarcastic, and the greatest buffoon in the nation; cared not what he said to man or woman of what quality soever. ’Twas he that made the curious wall about Rowlington-park which is the park that adjoins the house at Wilton.’

This was the wall through which, according to Aubrey, Mary Sidney used to watch the horses mating.

Gilbert was not Dee’s only connection with the Sidney circle. Thomas Moffet wrote in his life of Sir Philip Sidney, Mary’s brother, how ‘he pressed into the innermost penetralia of causes; and by that token, led by God, with Dee as teacher and with Dyer as companion, he learned chemistry, that starry science, rival to nature.’ Philip Sidney kept in contact with Dee after being taught alchemy by him. Before travelling to Bohemia in 1577 he visited Dee, in company with Dyer and the Earl of Leicester.

Edward Dyer, later Sir Edward, maintained his interest in alchemy and he will turn up again in this narrative. He was a poet, a confidential agent of the Earl of Leicester and a go-between for members of the Privy Council. He commissioned Dee to prepare a number of reports on political matters. In 1579 Dyer had stood as godfather to Dee’s eldest son, Arthur.

‘Our desire is to know what we are to think of the man who came out of my oratory and laid the fiery ball at Mr Adrian Gilbert’s feet yesterday as he sat by me in my study with Mr Kelly and me,’ said Dee, ‘whether it were any illusion, or the act of any seducer.’

‘No wicked power shall enter into this place, neither shall iniquity range where the fire of his piercing judgement and election lights,’ said Medicina. ‘He chose with fire and lightened their hearts and they immediately understood and felt the illumination of his glory.’

‘As the building is grounded and ended upon three, so must the mysteries hereof be practised with three. The fourth is the book which is here present.’

‘Must Adrian Gilbert be made privy to these mysteries?’

‘You have said,’ said Medicina. ‘Behold God shall bring these things to pass by the hands of him whose mind he has now newly set on fire. The corners and straits of the earth shall be measured to the depth and strange shall be the wonders that are creeping in to new worlds. Time shall be altered, with the difference of day and night. All things have grown almost to their fullness.’

‘Then,’ said Dee, ‘this Adrian Gilbert shall carry the name of Jesus among the infidels to the great glory of God and the recovery of those miserable people from the mouth of hell into which, for many hundred years past, and still continually they fall, etc.’

Salvation for the American native peoples and profits above the fiftieth parallel for Dee.

‘Who made your mouth prophesy? Or who opened the eyes of your understanding?’ said Medicina. ‘Who anointed your jaws or fed you with unknown meat? Even he it is that pricked these things forward and shall use you as his instrument to a mighty honour.’

‘May he require description of the countries for his better instruction?’ Dee asked.

‘Let darkness go behind you and do not tempt him that judges. These things do not belong to my charge. You know them who are sufficient when short time shall serve for the whole instruction. There is greater need to inquire how or by what means you may be made worthy and so consequently have knowledge for the knowing, having and using of this celestial medicine. Do not forget. I instructed you beforehand and told you that both of you must jointly learn those holy letters, for so I may boldly call them, in memory with their names, to the intent that the finger may point to the head, and the head to the understanding of his charge for making discoveries of the seas and their bounds.’

Dee tried to explain the difficulties.

‘You perceive that I have a number of affairs which at the present withdraw me from using peculiar diligence to these characters and learning their names by heart. Therefore I trust I shall not offend if I bestow all the convenient leisure that I shall get to learning this.’

‘Peace,’ said Medicina. ‘You talk as though you do not understand. We know you, we see you in your heart. One thing shall not delay another. For the time is short that shall bring these things to proof wherein he that lives shall approve himself alive. Beautiful are the footsteps of his coming, and great is the revenge of the wicked.’

Revelations were promised, Christ's coming was foretold, and yet there was always a deferral of the specific. The treasure map remained frustratingly unexplained, the achievement of financial stability endlessly postponed. Kelly tried bringing things to a conclusion with some private consultations while Dee was away in London the following day.

Dee records what happened. Kelly 'used means to have conference with the good creature with whom we have dealing jointly and there appeared one very like our good friend who took upon him to be the same and now seemed to be constrained by E. K. to tell the truth. And therefore his outward beautiful apparel seemed to go off and his body appeared hairy and he confessed that he was an illuder, etc. Whereupon E. K. was in a great perplexity of mind and was ready to have gone his way. And at my coming home told me a long process of this tragical act. But I comforted him and would not yield to his opinion but declared my confidence in the goodness of God, for we craved at his hands good and necessary things and so he would not give his children a stone for bread, or a scorpion for needful food required, etc.'

The next day, Maundy Thursday, they consulted again.

'I require the truth of yesterday's doings with E. K. in my absence,' said Dee.

'Camikas zure,' said the spirit who, Kelly reported, 'is like in all points to him who yesterday to me alone in your absence had declared himself to be an illuder.'

'Oh how brittle are the works of your hands whose imperfections are more innumerable than the sands of the sea, or clouds that were lifted up since the beginning of the world,' said the spirit. 'Darkness dare presume to place himself in lightness, and dishonour, oh God, to dwell in the place of glory. His lying lips presume against truth, while you suffered his old and withered face to be garnished with your beauty.' It was Medicina speaking though it looked like the illuder. 'But yet how long shall the sons of men puff up themselves with bragging and boasting about what they do not see?

'These afflictions are necessary,' Medicina continued. 'For in this is a measure to distinguish truth from falsehood, light from darkness, and honour from dishonour. The more they are like us or show themselves so, for nothing can be more unlike, the more they are judges of their own damnation.

'Yes,' he said, looking at Kelly, 'if his strength had been great he would have devoured your soul. But whom God has chosen none shall overturn. Brag not. Credit my words by your own reason.'

Then Medicina went away and a great many with flaming swords brought in the wicked spirit.

‘Speak now for yourself, you could speak yesterday,’ said one of them holding him by the arm.

Now the scroll with the characters which was found by spiritual direction this month, March 12, about ten thirty p.m. by Mr Kelly and Mr Husey was brought in.

The spirit now seemed as like our good friend as may be, Kelly reported.

Our friend came with a sponge and anointed the wicked spirit’s lips.

‘Else I could not speak,’ said a voice.

‘Seeing now you can speak, answer me,’ said Dee.

‘Ask quickly.’

‘What is your name?’

‘Gargat.’

‘What is the meaning of that scroll?’

‘I do not know.’

‘In the name of Jesus, I charge you to tell me the truth concerning that scroll shown here.’

‘I have counterfeited this roll and brought it; for it is not the true roll.’

After many words between him and me, records Dee, and the more because he denied that he knew of any glory belonging to God, I urged him at length, with short and evident arguments that he answered, that he must confess the power and glory of God, and said that he was damned for ever and wished damnation to me, and I requested God to use his justice on him for the glory of his name. Then he entreated me sometimes and sometimes derided me, saying ‘Are you so lusty?’ etc.

Then all the company fell on him and hewed him in pieces and dug a hole in the earth with their swords and he fell in and after that a mighty roaring was heard.

A fire came and seemed to burn all the house, purifying it.

‘Mr Kelly, is your doubt of the spirit now taken away?’ Dee asked.

‘Yes, truly, I beseech God to forgive me.’

Dee also consulted about his other project and the people involved. He had his own doubts.

‘As concerning Adrian Gilbert, there might be some doubt in common external judgement of his aptness to the performance of the voyage.’

But Medicina assured him, ‘If earth in mixture becomes fire, how much more shall he increase whom God has strengthened.’

‘When shall I make him privy of these things?’ Dee asked.

‘When you wish. For everything is acceptable with those that are accepted. See you counsel him and be his father.’

‘As concerning John Davis, we are to ask something.’

John Davis is not of my calendar,’ said Medicina.

It was a significant refusal of comment. John Davis was a close friend of Adrian Gilbert. He was one of the most eminent navigators and explorers of the time and it was he who finally commanded the expedition to discover the North-West passage. He was also like many sixteenth-century seamen, a pirate. When spirit denied knowledge of someone it usually meant they were known to the evil forces, not to the good.

11

As well as asking questions, Dee also expressed his frustrations. ‘As concerning the calendar to be reformed,’ he said, ‘I am grieved that her Majesty will not reform it in the best term of verity. And as for the privilege of Mr Adrian Gilbert’s voyage, I do not think well of it that royalties should not be granted. Therefore on both these points respecting her Majesty I would gladly have counsel such as in the judgement of the highest might be best for me to follow.’

Medicina gave him a lecture on practical politics. ‘In one government there are various principal parts. Every part in subdivision contains many different offices. Many offices require many disposers, yet every disposition continually has some partition in its quality.

‘Subjects, yes, the highest, are stirred up by their proper angels. The inferior sort follow the disposition of their leaders. Virtue and vice dwell everywhere. Light and darkness are always intermeddled.

‘I call to memory your words, the manner of your speech and the secret purpose or meaning to which it is uttered. I see your infirmities and know what you desire. But mark me, he whom God commonly chooses shall be someone whom the princes of the earth disdain.

‘God does not respect princes in particular so much as the state of his whole people. For in princes’ mouths there is poison as well as proverbs. And more sin in one heart than a whole world can contain. It is not my office to meddle with their vanities, neither is it a part of my pageant to touch anything that does not taste of medicine. But what? Does your mind reply? Do you think that my counsel here to a grieved mind is, though it can be, medicinal?’

‘Indeed,’ said Dee, ‘I thought that your good counsel was, or might be, a remedy and a medicine to my afflicted mind for this unseemly doing in the two former points expressed.’

‘See where your earthly man would seduce you to. Do you think that if it please God it shall not please the prince?’ said Medicina. ‘Do not quail at the blast of a small trumpet. For those that speak you fair have dissembling hearts and privily they shoot at you with arrows of reproach.

‘When they shall have need of you, I mean of the help of God through you, some shut up, some entangled, some gadding like masterless dogs, then shall they gladly seek you and desire to find you. They shall smell out your footsteps and you shall not see them. The key of their cares you shall be master of, and they themselves shall not unlock their own grievousness. They shall say, “Oh, let the earth devour us.”

‘But I am too long. I answer you, although it is not my office, to declare what you desire. Yet since you desire my medicine I say you shall prevail against them, even against the mightiest. Beware of vainglory. Use few words. Your weapons are small but your conquest shall be great. Does this satisfy you? Have a firm faith; it is the greatest lesson.’

12

But Dee still had further questions. Was it Laski’s greeting of ten days earlier that lay behind them? Asking about the portability of the table being made, was he already thinking of taking it with him on a new career in Europe, where the calendar was already reformed, where thinkers might find ready patronage, where ideas might be implemented rather than frustrated? He was surely not thinking of going to north America.

‘As things are planted here, for the preparation of the table, the seal of God etc. which are not portable with ease,’ said Dee, ‘so, because I think that some services to be done in God’s purpose by me will require other places than this house, so shall various of my practices have, as I think, a more compendious manner and ready to be executed in any place, etc.’

Medicina understood. ‘Truly you have said and so shall it fall unto you. As I am here in this place and yet indeed not, so, here, so shall it fall out and follow in the mysteries of your associated operation. The other shall be but as necessary help to the first practices, to plant the tree; which being confirmed and strongly rooted shall bring forth fruit most abundantly. The earth and the tree cannot be separated. This is the end and it is true.’

The earth, Dee noted, was Kelly, the tree was Dee, the planter Adrian Gilbert. Adrian Gilbert having done his part, whatever that had involved, might be separated from them. But Dee and Kelly were destined to work together. Kelly had reappeared four days after the greeting from Laski. Did he also know already that amazing travels and amazing events were in store for them?

13

‘What do you wish?’ Medicina asked them on Good Friday, 1583.

‘We desire to learn the mysteries of the book,’ said Dee.

The book appeared in the stone, lying upon a round thing. Kelly was not able to discern what it was. The first leaf of the book appeared full of the former letters, every side had forty-nine times forty-nine square places with letters; some more than others. This was the book of angelic language that they were writing from dictation. Lists of names. A preface of the creation and distinction of angels. Parcels of invitations very pleasant to good angels.

The dictation of letters resumed. ‘Keph van,’ – he lifted his face to heaven – ‘don graph fam veh na ...’

The enormity of the project began to tell on them, especially when they seemed to make errors, transcribing only six letters when every word was supposed to have seven, and being told, ‘You have written false.’

Finally Dee said (this was Easter Sunday), ‘If every side contains forty-nine rows and every row will require as much time to be received as this has done it would seem that a very long time will be requisite for receiving this doctrine. But if it is God’s good liking we would fain have some abridgment or compendious manner by which we might the sooner be in the work of God’s service.’

At this the chair and table were snatched away from the stone and seemed to fly towards heaven, leaving nothing behind but clear transparency.

‘What this snatching away of chair and table means we do not know,’ said Dee, ‘but if the lord be offended with his younglings and novices in these mysteries for propounding or requiring a compendious method, etc. then we are very sorry and ask forgiveness for the rashness at our lips and desire his Majesty not to deal so rigorously with us.’

‘What are the sons of men that they put time in her own bosom?’ Medicina asked. ‘The forty-nine parts of this book are forty-nine voices to which the same number of powers with their inferiors and subjects have been, are, and shall be obedient. Every element in this mystery is a world of understanding. Everyone knows here what is his due obedience.’

But he took pity on their request.

‘Until the secrets of this book are written I shall come no more, neither shall you have any sight of me. Yet in power my office shall be here. Say what you hear, for every word shall be named to you. It is a somewhat shorter way and more according to your desire.’

14

Amidst it all they were surrounded by informers and treachery.

‘Serve God and take heed of nettles,’ a spiritual voice warned them, April 5. This was spoken to Kelly in respect of a great anger he was in last night because someone had done him injury by speech at my table, Dee records, noting that the someone was Charles Sled.

Charles Sled was one of Walsingham’s most effective, most treacherous of secret agents. He had operated as a spy in Rome in 1579, reporting back on Catholic priests who were being prepared for undercover operations in England. He had compiled a dossier on nearly three hundred priests, soldiers, merchants and students he had met there. After his cover was blown he returned and continued his activities for Walsingham back in England. He presented evidence for the state at the trial of Edmund Campion. The evidence is widely believed to have been fabricated. Campion was sentenced to death and hanged, drawn and quartered at Tyburn in 1581..

Sled hung around Dee’s world for a number of years. Was Kelly’s rage an intuitive psychic recoil from him? Or did Kelly know all too well what Sled was? Was Sled there watching Dee, or Kelly, or both? Was Sled trying to undermine Kelly in Dee’s eyes by provoking him in some way? Or if Kelly as Talbot had originally been set to entrap Dee, did they know each other, Kelly and Sled, from working together in the past, or present?

15

The transmissions continued, block after block of mysterious language. Sometimes Kelly felt as if his head was on fire, sometimes he found himself unable to read the characters in the stone. Dee complained, ‘You should have learned the characters and their names so you might now have readily named them to me as you see them.’

Sometimes Kelly understood the language and would have spoken it but was willed not to. One time when Dee said, ‘We must pray,’ Kelly prayed perfectly in this angels’ language; but at the end of the transmission when the fire shot out of Kelly’s eyes into the stone again, by and by he could understand nothing of it, could neither read anything nor remember what he had said.

And then Raphael, or one like him, appeared and warned them: 'If you use double repetition in the things that follow, you will both write and work all at once, which man's nature cannot perform.'

They would be invoking spirits in the act of speaking the names to each other.

'The troubles would be so great that might ensue from that that your strength would be nothing to prevail against them.' And so he advised them, 'When it is written, read it no more with voice till it be in practice.' And he added for Dee, 'One note more, I have to tell you. Do not ask him what he says but write as you hear, for it is true.'

And now there was a pressing timetable for the work. April 6 they were told, 'In forty days must the book of the secrets and key of this world be written, even as it is manifest to the one of you in sight and to the other in faith. Therefore have I brought it to the window of your senses and doors of your imagination.'

Kelly was instructed to have the book always before him and to perform daily the office committed to him. 'Which if he do not, the lord shall raze his name from the number of his blessed and those that are anointed with his blood.'

The recording accelerated. But, Dee noted, 'I find a number of doubts which I cannot order to my contentment.'

1. How many of my ruled leaves shall I take for the writing of the first leaf?
2. How shall I make the distinctions of the last nine lines of the first leaf answerable to all the former words; how to move them into this and place all of these letters and this nine rows having but forty-nine letters?
3. How shall I do for the true orthography, seeing G and C and P etc have such various sounds, and not always one, as G sometimes as GH and sometimes as J, and C sometimes like K and sometimes like S, P sometimes like PH and sometimes P and sometimes F?
4. The number of the words in the first leaf in every row is not all one nor forty-nine always.
5. Of the wide table, where is to be set down all the tables following, all the table over, it will not agree to fill up all places and to set down the rows perfectly.

16

There were other mysterious touches and ambiguous figures that Dee records.

April 10, 9 a.m. As we were talking of the Macedonian (the Grecian) who yesterday came with Mr Sanford's letters, there appeared in the corner of my study a black shadow and I charged that shadow to declare who he was. There came a voice and said that it was the Macedonian; and about his hat was written in great letters this word 'kalasliklo' in Greek

characters, which Kelly wrote out, and it signifies maculosus, spotted, stained, defiled, or condemnatus est, he is condemned, and the voice said that word was sufficient, adding 'est.'

17

The treasure map was still engaging Dee's attention. April 11, about four o'clock, after coming home from court, and after being in his study a while, he writes, 'it came into my mind to try to decipher the cipher. At first I was half out of hope but yet making many tries and guessing it, at length, to be Latin,' he cracked the code.

'Table of the locations, the objects and the hidden treasure of Menaban of Gordanili, soldier and king of the Danes, expelled, and of many other famous men from the southern part of Britain, beside the military camps there, which here with the agreement of those closest to me, for the benefit and advantage of those of us returning at some future time, I decreed to be hidden and buried, which having been interpreted they may easily bring to light what was hidden.'

Dee also deciphered the notes of the ten places: 1. Gilds cros hie o ... meridio onali ... ot on. 2. blankis Suters croces. 3. Marsars got cros. 4. Huteos cros. 5. Fleds grenul. 6. Mons mene. 7. Mountegles arnid. 8. Lan sapant. 9. Corts nelds. 10. Mnrr merse.

The transliteration still left it enigmatic.

The last the Danes were here was about the year 1040, Dee noted.

He also noted again of the discovery, 'They were found at Huets Cross as the spiritual creature affirmed when he led them to the finding of this muniment and book of magic and alchemy. Perhaps that is the cross called Huteos Cross.'

But this note must have been added at a later date for at this point Kelly seems still not to have told Dee about finding *The Book of Dunstan*.

18

Monday, April 15, 1583.

As E. K. was writing the eighteenth leaf which was of the spirits of the earth, in the afternoon about 4.30 of the clock, Dee records, he read a parcel of it, plainly and aloud to himself, whereupon suddenly at his side appeared three or four spiritual creatures like labouring men, having spades in their hands and their hair hanging about their ears, and hastily asked E. K. what he wanted and why he called them. He answered that he had not called them. And they replied and said that he called them. Then I began to say they lied, for he had not intended to call them but only to read and repeat what he had written, and that every man who

reads a prayer to perceive the sense of it does not pray. No more did he call them. And I bade them be packing out of the place, and thereupon moved from my desk, where I was ruling paper for his writing, to the green chair which was by my chimney. And immediately he cried out and said they had nipped him and broken the skin of his left arm by the wrist. And he showed the bare arm and there appeared both on the upper side and the lower side, imprinted deep, two circles as broad as grotes, very red. A grote was a small coin.

Seeing that, I sought for a stick and in the meanwhile they assaulted him and he rose and cried to me, 'They come flying on me, they come.' And he put the stool, which he sat on, between him and them. But still they came gaping or gyrning at him. Then I asked him where they were and he pointed to the place and then I took the stick and came to the place and in the name of Jesus commanded those baggages to depart and smote a cross-stroke at them and immediately they departed.

19

Uriel had instructed that the book of secrets was to be completed in forty days. But now there were delays, sessions in which nothing was delivered. If the forty days were to be calculated from Good Friday, Dee figured, then twenty-one had already passed. Thirty tables had been completed. They were becoming anxious, anxious about the pressure of time, anxious about the frustrations. Dee expressed his anxiety to the spirits, only to be rebuked.

'How dare you doubt or dream, saying, "Lo, God, this may be done in shorter time," etc. But such is flesh. Be rocks in faith. It is not the manner of us good angels to be troubled so often. At the time appointed, you shall practice.

'Appoint God no time. Fulfil that which is commanded. God shall make clear when it pleases him and open all the secrets of wisdom when he unlocks. Therefore, do not seek to know the mysteries of this book till the very hour that he shall call you.'

And then Uriel said, 'I will ask you one question. Have we any voice or not?'

'I think you have no organs or instruments apt for voice,' Dee answered, 'but are mere spiritual and nothing corporeal. But you have the power and property from God to insinuate your message or meaning to eye or ear, in such a way as man's imagination shall be that they both hear and see you with the senses.'

'We have no voice but a full noise that fills every place; which when you once taste of, distance shall make no separation,' Uriel said.

Then he introduced a new creature and left. 'Let one come who may answer better, not in respect of you, but one nearer your estate.'

Dee would get used to the manner and idiom of one, and then there would be a new arrival.

‘Who are you?’ asked Dee, ‘are you one that loves and honours our creator?’

‘Will you see my heart?’ he asked, and opened his body and showed his heart. On it was written EL.

He seemed to be a very merry creature and skipped here and there, noted Dee, merry having that more dubious, lubricious association as in ‘merry wives of Windsor.’ His apparel was like a vice in a play and so were his gestures and his scoffing, as the outward show was to be vulgarly deemed. But I carefully pondered the pith of the words he spoke, and so forbore to write very much of what he spoke at the beginning, since E. K. so much mistook him as to take him to be an illuder.

‘As you are appointed to answer us by the messenger of God, so answer us, who desire the pure and plain truth, as may be correspondent to the credit of him who assigned you, and to the honour of God who created us.’

‘My answer is threefold,’ he said. ‘I answer by gesture, by my apparel, and will answer you by my words.’

‘Do you know where the Arabic book is that I had which was written in tables and numbers?’

‘It is in Scotland. A minister has it; it is worth nothing. The book contains false and illuding witchcrafts.’

‘The Lord Treasurer, has he any books belonging to Soyga?’

Was Burghley into magic too?

‘He has none; but certain introductions to all arts.’

‘But it was reported to me by this scryer that he had certain peculiar books pertaining to Soyga otherwise named Ysoga and Agyos, the letters transposed.’

‘Soyga does not signify Agyos. Soyga alca miketh.’

‘What do those words signify?’

‘The true measure of the will of God in judgement which is by wisdom.’

‘What language is that, I pray you?’

‘A language taught in paradise.’

‘To whom.’

‘By infusion to Adam.’

‘To whom did Adam use it?’

‘To Chevah.’

‘Did his posterity use the same?’

‘Yes, until the airy tower was destroyed.’

‘Are there any letters of that language yet extant among us mortal men?’

‘That there be.’

‘Where are they?’

‘Oh, sir, I shall make you in love with your mastership’s books.’

‘Did Adam write anything in that language?’

‘That is no question.’

‘Perhaps then they were delivered from one to another by tradition. Or else Enoch’s book, or prophecy, does, or may seem to be, written in the same language, because mention is made of it in the New Testament in Jude’s epistle where he has: Enoch, the seventh from Adam prophesied about them saying: Behold the Lord has come in his hosts to pass judgement on all and to accuse the impious regarding all his works of impiety with which they have wrought impiously; and concerning all the hard things which impious sinners have spoken against God, etc.’

‘I must make a distinction with you. Before the flood the spirit of God was not utterly obscured in men. Their memories were greater, their understanding more clear, and their traditions most unsearchable. Nothing remained of Enoch but (if it please your mastership) might have been carried in a cart. I cannot bring you the brass but I can show you the books. Sleep twenty-eight days and you shall find them under your pillow when you rise.’

Dee did not try the experiment.

As concerning Esdras’s books which are missing, what can you say?’

‘The prophets of the Jews have them.’

‘But we can hardly trust anything in the Jews’ hands concerning the pure verity. They are a stiff-necked people and dispersed all the world over.’

‘I will show you a trick.’

He lifted up his foot and showed the sole of his shoe and there appeared the picture of a man who seemed to have a scurf or foul skin on his face, which one took off and then there appeared on his forehead these two figures 88.

‘I will show you more than that, too, and will speak to a man shortly who will bring water to wash every man’s face.’

‘What do you mean by every man? Shall all men be made clean?’

‘There is a difference in washing faces.’

Kelly commented that this creature seemed to be a woman by his face; his apparel seemed

to be like a vice in a play.

‘Are you not kinsman to Syngolla?’ Kelly asked.

‘Yes, sir, and so are you a kinsman to Synfulla.’

‘A man may find corn in chaff,’ said Dee.

‘So may you perhaps find me an honest man in my ragged clothes.’

‘The other day,’ said Dee, ‘when I was in doubt about the Grecian (the Macedonian), whether he had any good and profound learning or not, he was represented spiritually, and about his hat in great letters was written this Greek word kalasliklo. What does it mean? I asked the Grecian and he said bebaith.’

‘Look in your book.’

I took the common lexicon, Dee records, and he said, ‘No, not that.’ Then I asked if I should take Lavernius’s lexicon, and he answered, ‘Nor that.’ And I asked, ‘Which then?’ and he said, ‘Your book covered with a white parchment.’ And I asked, ‘That of *Mysteries of Latin, Greek and Hebrew*?’ And he said, ‘Yes, and there you shall find that maculosus has only that one word kalasliklo belonging to it.’ I looked and so I found it, which satisfied me very well.

Maculosus means spotted, stained, defiled.

Finally Dee requested, ‘Sing a song to his praise, who created us.’

Was he, like Kelly, suspicious about this creature and checking again whether it was a servant of God or not?

‘I will sing a short song. Your doings are of God, your calling great. Go down and seek the treasure and you shall obtain it. Do not worry for this book shall be done in forty days. Begin to practice in August. After the end of forty days, go down for the treasure. When those forty days are done this book shall be finished. The rest of the time until August is for rest, labour and prayer.’

‘What labour?’

‘In digging up those treasures.’

‘Must we dig for them?’

‘You can do it otherwise if you wish.’

‘How? To dig without licence from the monarch is dangerous by reason of the laws. And to ask licence is half an odious suit.’

‘If you have a part or parcel out of every place of the earth in any small quantity, you may work by the creatures whose power it is to work in such causes; which will bring it, never trust me, before you can count twenty.’

He means, interpreted Dee, never trust him if it is not so as he has said.

‘No, never trust me, if it be not so.’

‘You mean those ten places marked in the table which I deciphered yesterday?’

‘Now you hit it, yes sir. And your chest also, it would do no hurt. Give me one and I will make forty, and give you twenty and take twenty for myself. And when you have it, I beg you let me have some little portion for my wife and children.’

‘As concerning the chest, how came the Macedonian or Mr Sanford to know of it so particularly as he did?’

‘Husey told of it openly at the board at Brainford – Brentford – in the hearing of various people. The Grecian will seek him out. The Greek can perhaps find out treasure in Greece but not in England. The Greek has a treasure in his head that will enrich him to be a fool. I was in London yesterday, I met a black dyer, he had a couple of rings that would give better instructions.’ And then he warned, ‘Your chimney here will speak against you soon, yet I am no bricklayer.’

True it is, noted Dee, I had hidden there in a cap-case the records of my doings with Saul and others, etc.

The spirit also advised Kelly to communicate to Dee the book and the powder and all the rest of the roll which was found, saying, ‘True friends hide nothing from each other.’

‘It is an old proverb,’ Dee remarked.

Apparently Kelly had still not shown Dee the powder or the *Book of Dunstan* discovered with the scroll. But now Dee had been told of them.

20

April 18, Dee records in his diary, ‘the Queen went from Richmond toward Greenwich, and at her going on horseback, being new up, she called for me by Mr Raleigh’s putting her in mind, and she said “quod defertur non aufertur” – a promise deferred is not broken – and gave me her right hand to kiss.’

21

And then Kelly exploded. Saturday, April 20 the stone was obscured with a dark cloud and he could see nothing.

Dee writes, ‘This Saturday had been great and eager pangs between E. K. and me, while he would utterly discredit the whole process of our actions as to be done by evil and illuding spirits seeking his destruction, saying that he has often before now been told things true but by illuding devils and now how can this be other than a mockery to have a cornered dark cloud

shown him instead of the plain writing which hitherto he had written out of? And that when they should do good in deed, then they shrank from us. And he was not thus to lose his time but he is to study to learn some knowledge, whereby he may live; and that he was a cumber to my house and that he dwelled here as in a prison; that it were better for him to be near Cotsall plain where he might walk abroad without danger to be cumbered or vexed with such slanderous fellows as he was yesterday, with one little Ned dwelling at the Black Raven in Westminster, who railed at him for bearing witness of a bargain made between the same Ned, or Edward, and one Lush, a surgeon, who was now fallen into poverty, a very honest man, etc. With a great deal of more matter, melancholic and cross overthwartly to the good and patient using of ourselves to the accomplishing of this action.

I replied that we might find ourselves answered on Thursday, as that God would clear when it pleased him; and that we were not to appoint God a time to perform his mysteries and mercies in shorter than he has spoken of. And that undoubtedly the occasion of this black cloud was some imperfection of ours to be amended and that then all would be to our further comfort. And as concerning his doubting the goodness of the creatures dealing with us, he was to blame to say or doubt the tree was ill that brings forth good fruit. For of these creatures from the beginning of their dealing with us till the last hour we never heard other than the praise of God, instructions and exhortations to humility, patience, constancy, faith etc. The things they promise are such as God can perform and are for his service and glory to perform, and such as have been imparted to man before, and therefore neither impossible for man to enjoy again, nor unmeet for us to hope for. And though his troubled mind did doubt, yet my quiet mind did not.

And whereas he complained of want, I said my want is greater than his, for I was in debt all of three hundred pounds, had a greater charge than he, and yet for all my forty years' course of study, spending many hundred pounds, travelling many hundred miles, many an incredible bite and forcing of my wit in using study to learn or to bolt out some good living, etc., yet for all this I would be very well pleased to be deferred yet longer, a year or more, and to go up and down England clothed in a blanket to beg my bread so that I might at the end be assured of attaining godly wisdom, by which to do God some service for his glory. And to be plain, that I was resolved, either willingly to leave this world now so that I might in spirit enjoy the bottomless fountain of all wisdom or else to pass my days on earth with God's favour and assurance of enjoying here his merciful mighty blessings, to understand his mysteries mete for the performing of true actions, such as might set forth his glory so as it might be evident and confessed, that such things were done by the Lord's right hand.

Then the spirit called El or Il appeared and said, 'Now to the matter.'

‘What matter?’ asked Dee

‘I must have a wallet to carry your wit and mine in.’

‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the lord,’ intoned Dee, in case this was a mischievous spirit.

‘Then I perceive that I shall have a blessing,’ said Il. ‘Blessed is the physician that has care of his patient before the pangs of death visit him.’

Dee asked him about the cloud in the stone.

‘I know what all your talk has been. But such minds, such infection, such corruption must have a potion applicable for a cure. But what will you do? I have forgotten all my drugs behind me. But since I know that some of you are well stored with sufficient ointments, I intend to visit you only with their help. You see, till my boxes are empty.’

He showed a great bundle of empty apothecaries’ boxes. Kelly could hear them rattle.

‘How is it,’ said Dee, ‘that you pretend to come from a favourable divine power to pleasure us and your boxes are empty?’

‘You said when you were talking, Jovis omnia plena. If my empty boxes be virtuous, how much more shall anything be which I bring that is not empty.’

‘Then say something of the virtue of your empty boxes so we may have better confidence in your fullness,’ said Dee.

‘Will you have my bill?’

‘Shall we go to the apothecary’s with your bill?’

‘I will show it. Serve it where you want. Judra galgol astel.’

‘You know we do not understand that. How can it be served?’

‘You need an expositor. What book of medicine is that?’

On Dee’s desk lay a copy of Marcus the hermit’s *Of The Spiritual Law* in Greek and Latin.

‘Here is good medicine indeed,’ said Il. ‘You found my name the other day. Go to my name.’

Dee turned to the second book and brought the seal of Emeth and there chose the word Ilemese.

‘Which letter of this name do you like best?’

‘L,’ said Dee, ‘because it contains the name representing God, El.’

‘Go to the large M, the second. This is what will serve his turn. If this cannot serve him he shall have a medicine that a horse cannot abide. Use this and I guarantee your blindness will be gone.’

Dee turned twenty-seven pages further through the book of Marcus the hermit till he came

to the Quaternie of M, the second, and there he found this sentence marked by lines he had drawn and a note in the margin. 'A contrite heart. Without a contrite heart it is impossible to be wholly free from wickedness and vices. The heart is made contrite by a threefold tempering – of sleep and of food and of bodily licence. It is the excess and abundance of these that generates pleasure. Now pleasure induces perverse thoughts and rebels against prayer and right thinking.'

This being considered by us, writes Dee, we ceased and thanked God for his mercies that it would please him to make us understand some just cause why clouds now appeared instead of brightness.

22

Dee was continually anxious, anxious about his finances, anxious about the treasure map, anxious about completing the book of tables in the specified time. His questionings provoked a divine rebuke.

'If you trouble me once more or touch the wings of my excellency before I shall move myself, I will raze you from the earth as children of perdition and will endue those that are of quiet minds with the strength of my power,' said Uriel. 'If you use me like worldlings I will surely stretch out my arm upon you, and that heavily.'

But Dee was incorrigible.

'Seeing it is said that in forty days the book shall be finished, and seeing it is said that our former instructors shall not come nor appear to us till the book be finished, and seeing heretofore the book used to appear to E. K. that he might write whensoever he bent himself to it, and seeing the same book does not appear now, and seeing we are desirous to be found diligent in this work, and to omit no opportunity wherein the writing of it might be furthered, we would gladly know what token or warning shall be given us henceforward when due time serves for the same purpose.'

'Die in the folly, I have said,' said Uriel.

It thundered and lightened about the cloud, and then everything vanished away.

Kelly said that at the very beginning of this day's action, when he expressed the first voice (this day) hard by him, his belly seemed to him to be full of fire; and he thought in truth that his bowels burned, and that he looked downwards towards his legs to see if anything appeared on fire, calling to his mind the recent accident that befell the adulterous man and woman by St Bride's church in London. Also, that when he had ended he thought his belly to be wider and much more enlarged than it was before.

Kelly was still moody. He quarrelled with Adrian Gilbert, but though they were reconciled and Gilbert was filled in on the spiritual actions, Kelly remained moody and stormed off from Mortlake. April 26, he returned to Dee's house after three days 'by the providence of God and Mr Gilbert's means and pacifying E. K.'s vehement passions and pangs.'

What lay behind the dispute? Was Jane Dee uneasy about Kelly? In recording that Kelly was persuaded to return, Dee writes 'and my wife very willing and quieted in mind and very friendly to E. K. in word and countenance and a new pacification on all parts confirmed, and all upon the confidence of God's service to be faithfully and cheerfully intended, and followed in and by our actions, through the grace and mercy of the highest.'

They were talking about the transposition of letters Sunday, April 28, after dinner, and Dee was explaining to Kelly his way of calculating how many ways any number of letters might be permuted, when suddenly Il appeared and said 'Here is a good disputation of transposition of letters. Choose whether you want to dispute with me about transposition or whether I shall teach you.'

'I would rather learn than dispute,' said Dee. 'And first, I think that those letters of our Adamical alphabet have a due, peculiar, unchangeable proportion of their forms, and likewise that their order is also mystical.'

'These letters represent the creation of man and therefore they must be in proportion. They represent the workmanship by which the soul of man was made like his creator. But I understand you will have a painter shortly.'

'What painter may best serve for the purpose? Can Mr Lyne serve the turn well?'

'Do you think that God can be glorified in hell, or can devils dishonour him? Can wickedness of a painter deface the mysteries of God? The truth is, I am come to warn you, lest with a small error you will be led far astray. Let me see the form of your table.'

Dee showed him the characters and words which were to be painted round the border of the table. This was the table of practice that had been made at last and was now awaiting the inscriptions.

'How do you like these letters?' Il asked.

'I do not know what I may say,' Dee replied, 'for perhaps what I should like were not so to

be liked and what I should think well of might be worth nothing.’

‘You speak well,’ said Il. ‘All things are perfect but only that. Neither was that shown or delivered by any good and perfect messenger from God. A wicked power intruded himself, not only into your society but also into the workmanship of God’s mysteries. Satan dares presume to speak of the almighty. Those characters are devilish and a secret band of the devil.’

Then they were given new instructions for the inscriptions.

‘Make a square of six inches each way. Let the border of it be here but half an inch but on the table itself let it be an inch broad. Every one of those sides must have twenty-one characters. But first, at each corner make a large B. Prayer is the key of all good things.’

After they had prayed Kelly saw in the stone innumerable letters and after a little while they were brought into a smaller square with fewer letters. They were given four lists of twenty-one characters each for the borders.

‘What do you have in the middle of the table?’

‘Nothing,’ said Dee.

‘The seal of Emeth is to be set there,’ said Il. ‘The rest after supper.’ And after supper the instructions continued in detail. Finally Il said ‘I have no more to say, but God transpose your minds, according to his own will and pleasure. You talk of transposition. Tomorrow I will be with you again. But do not call for me lest you incur the danger of the former curse.’

The following day Il explained, ‘Every letter here brings forth the names of God. But indeed they are but one name.’ As for the false letters, Il explained, ‘The character is false and devilish. He who dwells in you told you so long ago. The former devil did not only insinuate himself but these things.’

‘I marvel that we had no warning of this before now and that I was often called on to prepare those things – the characters and the table – and yet they were false,’ said Dee.

‘If it had gone ahead to be made it would not have been allowed to pass in its wicked form,’ said Il.

And then they were instructed in the proper ordering of the letters in tabular form.

25

After these things were finished, Dee records, Kelly rose from the table and went to the west window to read a letter which had just arrived from his wife. It is the first time his wife is mentioned in the spiritual transactions. Then he took a little prayer book in English metre by William Hunnis, *Seven Sobs of a Sorrowfull Soule for Sinne*, which Adrian Gilbert had left here, and it lay on the table by us all the time of this last action, and with this book he went into

his bed chamber intending to pray on it, a certain prayer which he liked. As he opened the book his eye spied strange writing in the spare white paper at the book's end, and looking at it he judged it to be his own letters and the thing of his own doing. But being assured that he never saw the like of this character (for conciliation) and that other, notified by the heart or centre, skin and flesh, before this present hour, he became astonished and in great wrath.

And suddenly one appeared to him and said, 'This is as good as that other,' meaning that which we had received and is here set down on the former page.

With this news E. K. came to me as I was making a fair copy of this last action and said, 'I have strange things to tell you.'

'What is that?' Dee asked.

'You shall know,' he said, at first tossed in his mind with this great injury of the subtle supplanter of man ambitiously intruding himself to rob God of his glory. At length he showed Dee one of the white leaves at the end of the book. And looking at it Dee saw it was meant as a counterfeit of theirs, though imperfect in various ways, but in their style. Seeing it was a fake Dee laughed, deriding the wicked enemy for his envy, his ass-headed foolish ambition, indeed for his blind inability to do anything well.

To conclude, Dee writes, we found that with an incredible speed this devilish figure was written by some wicked spirit, to bring us to doubt our perfect doings, either to provoke us to undue speeches of God's good creatures or to make our minds waver as to the worthiness and goodness of the things received, and so either to leave off, or to proceed with fainthearted wavering.

But Dee's faith was not shaken. Rather, he resolved after supper to make his earnest complaint to the divine majesty against this wicked intrusion and temptation of the illuding devil. 'And so we went to supper.'

26

After supper Dee prayed in his oratory and Kelly knelt at the green chair standing in front of the chimney and prayed. Before Dee had finished Kelly noticed a spiritual creature come to Dee's table. Dee went to his desk to write should there be a message and the creature announced, 'I give place to my better.'

Then Uriel appeared. He reassured them about the difficulties.

'As mercy is necessary for those that repent and faithfully forget their offences, so is temptation requisite and must ordinarily follow those whom it pleases to illuminate with the beams of triumphant sanctification.'

But there was a specific rebuke for Kelly.

‘But oh youngling but old sinner, why do you suffer your blindness to increase?’

The evil spirit was identified.

‘His name is Belmagel and he is the firebrand who has followed your soul from the beginning, seeking its destruction. Who can counterfeit better than he who in your wickedness is chief lord and master of your spirits? Or who has been acquainted with the secrets of man’s fingers so much as that has been director?’

It had been a narrow escape.

‘Tonight, if your prayers had not been, if they had not pierced into the seat of him who sits above, you would have been carried and taken away, this night, into a wilderness so far distant northward that your destruction would have followed. Therefore lay away the works of youth and fly from fleshly vanities.’

27

Dee prepared a list of twenty-eight questions and doubts ready to read to the spiritual instructors since ‘on Friday last while my friend E. K. was writing the tables he was told that they would be finished on Monday next, and that on the Sunday before, that is today, after noon all doubts should be answered.’

Uriel reassured him. ‘The book, I say, shall be finished tomorrow, one thing excepted, which is how to use it, for which the Lord has appointed a day. But because I will speak to you after the manner of men, see that all things are in readiness for the first day of August next. Humble yourselves nine days before, rip out the cancers of your infected souls so you may be apt and meet to understand the secrets that shall be delivered. Why? The Lord has already sent his angels to visit the earth and to gather the sins together that they may be weighed before him in the balance of justice. And then is the time that the promise of God shall be fulfilled. Do not doubt for we are good angels.

‘In forty more days must this book be perfected so that you also may be perfected in the workmanship of him who has sealed it. Out of this shall be restored the holy books which have perished even from the beginning and from the first that lived. And herein shall be deciphered perfect truth from imperfect falsehood, true religion from false and damnable errors, with all arts which are proper to the use of man, the first and sanctified perfection, which when it has spread a while, then comes the end.’

Then followed instructions for the use of the table.

‘Your character must have the names of the five angels (written in the middle of the seal of

Emeth) engraved on the other side in a circle, in the middle of which must be the stone, which was also brought. Wherein you shall at all times behold (privately to yourself) the state of God's people through the whole earth. The four feet of the table must have hollow things of sweet wood whereupon they may stand: within the hollowness whereof your seals may be kept unperished. One month is all, for the use of it. Thus says the lord, when I brought you up in the likeness of birds, increasing you and suffering you to touch the skies, I opened to you the end of your rejoicing. For this doctrine shall touch the skies and call the stars to its testimony. And your footsteps shall visit (almost) all the parts of the whole world.'

Were their travels already planned? Five days earlier, on May 1, Dee noted in his private diary that Laski, the Polish lord who had sent him greetings, had arrived in London.

28

'What is your order and direction for bringing of the earths from the places of hidden treasure?' Dee asked, May 5.

'After you have eaten it shall be told you,' said Uriel.

It had already been a long session. They resumed at eight thirty after supper.

'After this holy book is finished then it is necessary that the foresaid commandment, concerning fetching of the earth, shall be fulfilled and performed with speed.

'And he says thus: my angel shall be amongst you and shall direct his journey and will bring his feet even into the place and places where that earthly filth and corruption lies. Error shall not deceive him. Many temptations shall assail him in following this commandment. But it is said, I will be with him. God will deal mercifully with you.'

'What if he first goes to Newbury,' asked Dee, 'and with the earth being taken from there proceeds to the other places noted in the scroll and then with the earth of those ten places, the rest of the scroll, the book found with it, and the red congealed thing in the hollow stone, come directly here; and then the rest of the peculiar practice for enjoying the premises to be learned? Or how else will you have him order his journey?'

'As you wish, so shall it be brought to pass,' said Uriel.

'As concerning the victorious captain, the Lord Albert Laski, the Pole who so much desires my acquaintance and conference, how shall I use myself to God's best liking, my country's honour and my own good credit?'

'Remember, it is said, that the princes of the earth shall not discredit, much less work your confusion. He that dwells in you above worlds shall give you sufficient worldly discretion in worldly occasions.'

And then Dee asked about the vision which last night ‘was presented, unlooked for, to E. K.’s sight as he sat at supper with me in my hall. I mean, the appearance of the very sea and many ships on it, and the cutting off the head of a woman by a tall black man. What are we to make of that?’

‘The one signified the provision of foreign powers against the welfare of this land, which they shall shortly put in practice. The other, the death of the Queen of Scots. It is not long to it.’

The date was May 5, 1583. Dee noted in the margin, ‘The Queen of Scots to be beheaded.’

At some later date he added, ‘So she was, anno 1587 at Fotheringhay castle. And also the same year a great preparation of ships against England by the King of Spain, the Pope and other princes called Catholic, etc.’

That was the Spanish armada of 1588.

They had seen into the future.

The following day Dee went to London and Kelly stayed at Mortlake completing the lettering for the table. When he could not easily imitate the form of the characters or letters as they were shown, then they appeared drawn on his paper with a light yellow colour onto which he drew the black, and then the yellow colour disappeared and only the shape of the letter in black remained.

There was so much to do, the samples of earth to be collected, the book to be written in forty days before August. But it wasn’t clear when they were to begin and Dee was anxious to know whether the book was to be written on paper or parchment, whether the lines were to be ruled in green or blue.

When they next called on their spiritual friends, however, there appeared in the stone a fair palace. A tall well-favoured man, very richly dressed with a brave hat and a feather on his head, came out followed by a great number of figures all like courtiers.

‘How pitiful a thing it is when the wise are deluded,’ he said.

‘I smell the smoke,’ said Dee, certain that this was a wicked tempter.

Having stiffly and stoutly condemned Dee a good while, mocked him and at length threatened to destroy his wife and children, the man assured him, ‘As truly as the lord lives, all that is done is lies.’

‘That, your sentence, I will record against you,’ said Dee, ‘to be laid to your charge at the

dreadful day.'

Eventually Uriel reappeared.

'Form and write the book after your own judgement,' he told Dee. 'More than has been said, and more plainly, cannot be uttered.'

'Since we are to hurry to fetch the earth and the other things, and we have tried to get a horse but we could not get one, and without some better provision of money than we have we cannot do anything,' said Dee, 'therefore if it might please God that we might have but the possession of the smallest pinch of earth of the ten places delivered to us here, it would greatly please us.'

'Will these worldlings hold on in their iniquity?' said Uriel, disappearing with the table and everything from the stone in a cloud.

Dee realized his mistake and prayed, a lamentable pang of prayer.

A thing like a tongue on fire appeared in the stone.

'You have delivered yourself to the desires of your heart,' the tongue said, 'you have spoken iniquity.'

'I doubt the truth of that tongue,' said Dee.

But he soon became abashed at what he had said and saw his error and asked forgiveness.

'It is forgiven but it shall be punished,' said the tongue.

Dee, deeply unhappy, promised 'a greater care in governing my tongue in the future. And promised to forbear to accompany with my own wife carnally except by heavenly leave and permission.'

31

Dee prayed for forgiveness again the following day, Holy Thursday, May 9. Kelly was about to set off for the samples of earth and Dee wanted some comfort and token of forgiveness before Kelly left.

Forgiveness was given.

'But be warned. Behold my arms are longer than my body and I have eyes round about me.'

And then Dee asked yet again for specific directions about the book.

'Whereas the ordering of the book is referred to my judgement, in my mind it seems requisite that as all the writing and reading of that holy language is from the right hand to the left, so the beginning of the book must be (as it were in respect of our most usual manner of books in all languages of Latin, Greek, English, etc.) at the end of the book; and the end at the

beginning as in the Hebrew Bible.

‘Secondly, the first leaf cannot be written in such little and equal squares as all the rest of the forty-seven leaves are, because the first leaf, except nine lines of the second page, is all of words, some containing many letters and some few, very differently; so I intend to make many leaves serve to distinguish the forty-nine rows of the first leaf, and at the end of every word to draw a line of partition up and down, between the next two parallel lines, etc., or as shall come into my mind then.’

‘He that says “Do this” directs your judgement,’ said Uriel.

Now a veil was drawn before everything, Kelly reported, and all things appeared far more beautiful than they ever did.

Dee gave thanks and became very joyful in his mind that he had been pardoned. And then Kelly took the boat down river to London, where he was to buy a saddle, bridle and boot hose. He had bought a pretty dun mare off Goodman Pentecost the day before for three pounds ready money in angels. God be his guide, help and defence, wrote Dee. He was to head homeward for ten or twelve days, wherever home was – Worcester where he had been born, Chipping Norton where his wife had been born, or Blockley where she was staying.

FOUR : LASKI, MADINI AND OTHER VISITORS

1

On May 1, 1583 Dee noted in his private diary the arrival in London of Lord Albert Laski. Lord Burghley also noted the arrival, and wrote to Sir Christopher Hatton who as Vice-Chamberlain was responsible for entertaining foreign dignitaries.

‘I perceive that a count of Poland, named the Palatine Laski, has either arrived or shortly will arrive at Harwich to come to her Majesty; and if he is the real Count Palatine of that house of Laski, he is a personage of great estimation, such as few are subjects to any monarch in Christendom, few in the Empire of the greatest exceeding him in sovereignty and power; and he is also one that, as I find by late observations since this King Stephen’s reign, has carried great authority; and before his time, in the interregnum, none that had greater than he except the great palatine of Lineland.’

Burghley wanted Hatton to arrange for some nobleman, Lord Rich or Lord Darcy, to meet Laski with proper state at Harwich – once they had established that it was Laski. Hatton, however, stalled. He thanked Burghley for notifying him of ‘this great personage,’ but needed to find out more from the Earl of Leicester. He intimated that there was some doubt in the Queen’s mind about what Laski wanted and what his current political status was in Poland. ‘Her Majesty defers all her directions for order to receive him until she is more fully informed both of his quality and occasion of access. She seems to suspect that he departs from his prince as a man in displeasure, because in one sentence of his letter to her Majesty he calls her the refuge of the disconsolate and afflicted.’

Nicholas Faunt, secretary to Sir Francis Walsingham, wrote to Anthony Bacon about Laski and his status in Poland. ‘His family you shall read to be the best there and of which the kings have heretofore been most commonly elected, and for his personage very rare, and surpassing all that I have seen of his years, which are fifty-six or thereabouts. He has been general in more than forty fought battles, and yet is of that lustiness and strength, that he is able to lead as many more, before he be ready in man’s judgement for the grave. He is very civil, and speaks the Italian and Latin very well, but the Slavonian and other languages thereabouts very naturally. He has in his time greatly annoyed the Turk. He is of great revenues, and lives there at his own charges, having refused her Majesty’s offer in that behalf, who takes great delight to talk with him, and has already in one week since his coming given him her presence twice. It is thought that he will stay here this summer, being desirous to travel into some parts of the country. And her Majesty means this next week to carry him to Nonesuch, and some

other such places, where he shall be feasted and entertained according to his quality. After which we shall learn further of his estate and purpose of coming hither.’

Laski had been a powerful figure in the elections to the Polish throne. He had been a major participant in the Polish delegation to France after the election of Henri de Valois, and during his visit there he had married the daughter of the King, Sabine de Sévé, his third, and last, wife. When Henri de Valois deserted the Polish throne after a few months and returned to France, Laski had initially backed the candidature of Maximilian II, the Habsburg Holy Roman Emperor. He drew up his private army with a view to influencing the election, which had at least half a dozen serious candidates. Laski is generally believed to have been behind the approach to Philip Sidney to stand as a candidate. Sidney and Laski had met in Venice in 1573. Queen Elizabeth firmly prohibited that proposal. Ultimately Laski supported Stephen Báthory, the Prince of Transylvania, who was elected king in 1575. Stephen was a strong Catholic force in the European counter-reformation and introduced the Jesuits into Poland. Laski himself had converted to Catholicism, though his uncle had been the celebrated Protestant reformer of Poland. But Laski’s power as a kingmaker had now vanished. The oligarchs, of which Laski was a major representative, had lost power to the knighthood led by Jan Zamoyski. None of this was known in England, however. Burghley might have had his suspicions, but Laski was still seen as the powerful figure Sidney had met a decade earlier. What his current relationship was with King Stephen no one knew.

2

‘A learned man, of a good feature of body, with a long beard and very comely and decent apparel,’ William Camden described Laski.

Holinshed offers a fuller account. ‘This Albert, in the eyes of the most, whereof some knew him, that might hardly commend him, esteemed him a man for making well proportioned, of an indifferent tall stature, of countenance amiable, and complexion English-like, having a white beard of such length and breadth, as that lying in his bed, and parting it with his hands, the same overspread all his breast and shoulders, himself greatly delighting therein, and reputed it an ornament: as for his qualities (apparent unto the world) they were generous, his utterance sweet, his wit plausible, in the knowledge of tongues well seen; his ordinary attire scarlet, but when he presented himself to her Majesty, a robe or gown of purple velvet, with other habiliments and furniture agreeable; his shoes of a strange fashion, supposed of some not altogether unlike Chaucer’s. Finally, a gallant fellow he was, and (as might be gathered by some words spoken by him in open audience – at Oxford, where he

termed the Latin that he spake *Militate Latinum*, that is, soldier's Latin.) more Martial than Mercurial; very active in respect of his age, and also studious in diverse faculties, etc.'

Observers could describe his appearance. But what was he doing in England? Nobody seemed to know.

Laski was lodged at Winchester House in Southwark, belonging to the Earl of Leicester, arriving there by water on the last day of April. He lived there for most of his stay in England. He was provided with an English servant, William Herle, who had worked for Leicester's intelligence operations in 1581. A Welsh merchant and linguist, a decade earlier Herle had been a crucial agent of Burghley's in the Ridolfi plot; a man 'of very good quality' Burghley called him. Put into the Marchelsea prison in Southwark on a charge of piracy, he had gained the confidence of Charles Bailly, a former employee of Mary Queen of Scots, and at that time a secretary and courier to the Bishop of Ross. Bailly had been arrested at Dover with letters to the bishop that revealed a Catholic conspiracy to put Mary on the English throne. In the Marchelsea Herle gained Bailly's confidence, supplied him with pen and paper, and arranged to have letters smuggled to Bailly's friends outside. The letters were of course intercepted, Herle reporting the whole while to Burghley. Without doubt Herle was continuing his work for Burghley now that he was attached to Laski. The visit of a powerful Roman Catholic count to England inevitably invited surveillance.

The only purpose of the visit that Laski gave out was his wish to see Queen Elizabeth. The French ambassador reported back to France that Laski was trying to persuade the English to stop selling arms to the Russians, who were engaged in territorial disputes with Poland. Another theory, rather bland, is that he was on a world tour. The major activity documented is his series of meetings with Dee and Kelly. Why did Laski want to meet Dee, why had he sent him greetings back in March?

3

Olbracht Łaski, to give him his Polish name, was born in 1536 at Kežmarok in the Spiš region of eastern Slovakia. An archetypal Renaissance aristocrat, he was the author of two books in Latin, one a military treatise, the other on religion and politics. He had travelled widely round the European courts – Vienna, Paris, Florence, Venice. And he was known as a great patron of alchemists, spiritual reformers and poets. In 1569 he had financed the first edition of Paracelsus' *Archidoxae Philosophia*, book X, annotated by his personal physician John Gregory Macro and translated by the poet laureate of Silesia, Adam Schröter, who had spend a considerable amount of time at Laski's court.

Laski was not only a scholar, he was also a successful soldier. He had campaigned in Sweden, occupying the castle of Uppsala and marching on Stockholm. He had provided military support for Jacob Basilicò, the former Calvinist professor in Rostock, also known as Heraclides Despot, who had undertaken a reformation in Moldavia in the early 1560s, attempting to establish an independent Protestant state. These and various other incidents were celebrated in numerous poems by Polish writers.

For all his vast landholdings, Laski was impoverished and one theory is that he hoped to benefit from Dee and Kelly's alchemical expertise. Laski was known in Poland as a 'bag without a bottom.' Back in 1575 Charles de l'Écluse had written to Philip Sidney that 'Laski, as you know, had reached the bottom of his purse.' His military and political activities, his generosity, and his extravagant personal life had drained his financial resources. His huge landed estates were so heavily mortgaged that, as one Polish scholar put it, he could hardly be said to have owned them.

Dee had three alchemical laboratories at Mortlake and had been experimenting there for twenty years. His library contained some ninety alchemical books and sixty alchemical manuscripts, many consisting of more than one work. There is a diary of his alchemical experiments for 1581 preserved in the Bodleian library, and his private diary indicates something of his work in the area. 'I revealed to Roger Cook the great secret of the elixir of the salt of acetyls one upon a hundred,' he wrote December 28, 1579. When Cook left Dee's service after fourteen years, in September 1581, Dee wrote, 'if he used himself well in life towards God and the world, I promised him some pretty alchemical experiments whereupon he might honestly live.' Cook later built the still houses with which Walter Raleigh and the Earl of Northumberland experimented when they were imprisoned in the Tower of London, and later still he assisted Cornelius Drebbel in his alchemical experiments at the Emperor Rudolf's court in Prague. After Cook left his service Dee had other assistants and collaborators. In May 1582 he records that Robert Gardner had shared with him a spiritual revelation about the philosopher's stone.

It is not clear, however, how much, if any, alchemical activity Dee was engaging in at the time of Laski's visit. The *Book of Dunstan* that Kelly had found was certainly alchemical. But the first record of a successful transmutation does not occur for another three years, though there may well have been activities and successes that went unrecorded.

The spiritual transactions are documented in detail and occupied a huge amount of Dee's time, in the sessions themselves and in the later transcription of his notes into a fair copy. They were kept a close secret for fear of arrest for heresy and blasphemy, so that it is most unlikely

that Laski would have heard of them. But they were certainly within Laski's area of interest. Possibly there was a connection with the late Emperor Maximilian II, whom Laski had supported for the Polish throne. Dee had dedicated his *Monas Hieroglyphica* to Maximilian in 1564. Whether Dee ever met Maximilian in person is not known, but he certainly sent him a copy of the book.

4

Dee was not the only alchemist and spiritual philosopher that Laski approached. According to Anthony a Wood he also courted Thomas Allen 'to go with him to his own country 1583, and to live there as he pleased, and accept such honours and dignities which he could get for him, but he being delighted with retiredness and an academical life, evaded his civility and thereby as a true philosopher, contemned richness and greatness.'

And then there was the young Latin poet Thomas Watson, who wrote Laski a letter offering him his services. But what services was he really offering? Watson was a Catholic who had travelled in Europe. He had spent some time at Douai, where the seminary for training Catholic priests to be sent secretly into England was established, and he had formed some sort of connection with Walsingham when the latter was ambassador in Paris. Later he was arrested for killing an innkeeper's son who was having a fight with Christopher Marlowe. He was acquitted on the grounds of self-defence. His association with Marlowe and Walsingham is generally taken to indicate that he was one of Walsingham's secret agents, and his poem *Melibæus* is an elegy for Walsingham. Edmund Spenser referred to his untimely death in 1592 in *Colin Clouts Come Home Again*, and in 1595 William Covell referred to Shakespeare as, in literary terms, 'Watson's heir.'

Whatever Laski's interest may have been in meeting Dee, there is the other side of the matter too, Dee's interest in meeting Laski. The theory that Dee was ready to look for a distinguished patron has its persuasiveness. Unable to achieve financial stability in England, in debt as he told Kelly for three hundred pounds, his requests for increased financial support continually unfulfilled, Dee may well have felt he would be more appreciated abroad than at home. European courts, in marked contrast to England, employed court scientists. Laski's visit may have been seized on as another desperate possibility, along with Gilbert's North-West passage project and the search for hidden treasure.

And then there were the interests of Walsingham and Burghley. Walsingham had supported Dee in the past and had been meeting with him frequently in the early part of 1583. With his network of agents and informers monitoring the international as well as local Catholic

conspiracies against Elizabeth, Walsingham was inevitably suspicious of Laski. Perhaps he saw Dee as a potential high level source of information on Laski's intentions.

Kelly, similarly, was an appealing source of information. Especially if the authorities had something over him that they could use to make sure he cooperated. Years later, in 1590, he wrote to Burghley about a Catholic conspiracy against England that he had discovered in Prague. Whether this was a one-off piece of information sent by Kelly for his own purposes, or whether there were other such communications is not clear. If Kelly was acting as an agent it may be that Burghley had recruited him before he left England.

Whether or not Dee and Kelly were recruited as informers for Burghley or Walsingham, without doubt they were being informed upon, as Charles Sled's presence at Dee's table suggests. Indeed they were certainly being informed upon even if they were supplying information themselves.

5

May 11, 1583, Laski wrote to Queen Elizabeth.

My devoted service to your Majesty, due to your rare qualities, compels me to write the present; wherein is enclosed this which has just reached me, with certain advices. And although the penetration of your prudence will perhaps have already foreseen and realised what is here written, I beg you to accept my goodwill, as the water was accepted when offered in the hand of him who had nothing else. If my power were equal to my desire, I should think it my highest pleasure to serve you even to my own blood. From my lodging, 11 May, 1583.
Most humble and bounded servant.

6

Sir Henry Cobham reported to Walsingham on the same day.

As for Laski, they make me know that he was sometime a Palatine in Poland, and of great authority; rich of revenues, which through the great court he kept were utterly consumed. He had hoped during the interregnum after the late king's death to be elected king, in case the election had grown on some of that country concurring with the Palatine Borosco; which hope failing, he betook himself to run the course of France, and was sent hither for the conducting of the present French king into Poland. At that time he married in Paris a young Italian woman of mean condition and bad reputation. After the king's return to France, Laski favoured the Emperor Maximilian; whose cause not taking place for the election of Poland, upon Báthory the present king of Poland's coming to the crown, Laski retired to the Emperor's court, where, and

in Italy, he remained till he was restored to Báthory's grace, who received him two years ago, relieving him with money and other means. This perhaps was not sufficient to satisfy his liberal mind and manner of expense. Laski showed himself during his abode in the Emperor's court and in Italy to be a Papist; he had divers gifts of sundry princes. These are the particulars of what they have informed me concerning Laski. I wish that his coming may be to good purpose and her Majesty's satisfaction.

7

Laski met Dee within a fortnight of arriving. May 13 Dee's diary records, 'I became acquainted with Albert Laski at 7.30 at night, in the Earl of Leicester's chamber in the court at Greenwich. This day was my lease of Devonshire mines sealed at Sir Leonel Duckett's house.'

The mining leases were no doubt another of Dee's stratagems for raising money. That they were awarded the day that he met Laski is an interesting synchronicity. Was the granting of the lease somehow connected with Dee's making contact with Laski? A payment for services to be rendered? Or an offer to discourage him from being bought by Laski? The governor of the Mines Royal was Walsingham.

Five days later, May 18, Dee met Laski again. 'The Prince Albert Laski came to me at Mortlake, with only two men. He came at afternoon and tarried supper, and after sunset.'

Visiting with only two men, Laski may have been hoping not to attract notice. But on May 20 William Herle reported to Sir Christopher Hatton about his attempts to find out from Laski his 'course of journeys.' The same day the French ambassador Castlenau informed Queen Elizabeth through Hatton that he had been to Winchester House the evening before to inquire where Laski planned to go next and found he had gone to visit Dee for the day to look at his library.

Castlenau wrote to the French king, Henry III, the following day. Henry had briefly been king of Poland in 1575, until he absconded to France. He had had troubles with Laski in Poland and absolutely refused to let him land in France. Castlenau assured Henry that he had conveyed the message to Laski that he was not welcome. He had used the Italians in Laski's entourage to pass on the message. Castlenau and Laski met a fortnight or so later at a tournament at Greenwich. They had a stiff conversation about Polish matters.

8

Laski left three questions with Dee to submit to the spirits. They give some sense of Laski's preoccupations.

Concerning the life of King Stephen of Poland, what may be said?

Will his successor be Albert Laski or from the house of Austria?

Will Albert Laski, Palatine of Sieradz, possess the kingdom of Moldavia?

Four days later Kelly returned from his journey with samples of earth from the places specified in the treasure map.

The following day, May 23, they were back at the spiritual transactions, eager to know about the treasure, and eager to get answers for Laski. Dee prayed both in his oratory and at his desk, giving thanks for Kelly's safe return, and for the benefit received from the governor and assistants for the mines royal 'which I perceived was the extraordinary working of God for their inward persuasion, they being else very unwilling so to let the lease as I obtained it.'

After exhortations and warnings and reminders of God's way and man's way, the specific questions were dealt with.

'To the purpose. Who puffed up this prince's father with desire to visit these countries or who has prevented him? Even he that has provided him a son as an arm to his chosen. Truly the hills shall be covered with blood, the valleys shall take up the cedar trees unframed. He sees these places, but knows not to what end. He is dead, in respect of his absence. But honour them whom God has sanctified. For behold the Lord has said, you shall govern a people; a time there is which is prefixed; and it is the course of the sun. Then shall it be said unto him, Oh King.'

But there would be difficulties.

'Many witches and enchanters, many devils have risen up against this stranger and they have said, "We will prevail against him." Why? There is one who aspires and he it is that seeks his confusion. But I will grant his desire. He shall do good with many. Your names are in one book. Fear not, therefore. Love together.'

Already, at this first session after Laski's arrival and Kelly's return, they were assured that 'your names are in one book,' their destinies were interwoven.

9

May 28, 1583, Dee recorded the arrival of another visitor.

As I and E. K. sat discoursing of the noble Pole Albert Laski's great honour obtained here with us, his great good liking of all states of the people, of them that either see him or hear of him, and again how much I was beholding to God that his heart should so fervently favour me, and that he does so much strive to suppress and confound the malice and envy of my countrymen against me, for my better winning or recovering credit to do God better service by this in future, etc., suddenly there seemed to come out of my oratory a spiritual creature, like a

pretty girl of seven or nine years of age, attired on her head with her hair rolled up in front and hanging down very long behind, with a gown of say – silk – changeable green and red, and with a train.

She seemed to play up and down, to go in and out behind my books that lay there in heaps, and as she went between them the books seemed to give way, one heap from another, as she passed between them.

‘Whose maiden are you?’ asked Dee.

‘Whose man are you?’

‘I am the servant of God both by my bound duty and also, I hope, by his adoption.’

A voice said, ‘You shall be beaten if you tell.’

‘Am I not a fine maiden?’ she said. ‘Give me leave to play in your house, my mother told me she would come and dwell here.’

She went up and down with the most lively gestures of a young girl, playing by herself. Several times someone spoke to her from the corner of the study, by a great perspective glass, but no one besides her was seen.

‘Shall I? I will,’ she said, seeming to answer someone in the corner of the study. ‘Please let me stay a little.’

‘Tell me who you are,’ said Dee.

‘Please let me play with you a little and I will tell you who I am.’

‘In the name of Jesus then tell me.’

‘I rejoice in the name of Jesus, and I am a poor little maiden, Madini.’ The name suggests a near anagram of maiden, though sometimes it is given as Madimi. ‘I am the last but one of my mother’s children. I have little baby children at home.’

‘Where is your home?’

‘I dare not tell you where I dwell, I shall be beaten.’

‘You will not be beaten for telling the truth to them that love the truth; to the eternal truth all creatures must be obedient,’ said Dee, asserting the authority of human years over spiritual youthfulness.

‘I promise you I will be obedient. My sisters say they must all come and dwell with you.’

‘I desire that they who love God should dwell with me and I with them.’

‘I love you now you talk of God.’

‘Your eldest sister’s name is Esemeli.’

‘My sister is not as short as you make her.’

‘Oh, I apologize, she is to be pronounced Esemeli.’

She smiled, and someone called her, 'Come away, maiden.'

'I will read over my gentlewomen first. My Master Dee will teach me if I say it wrong.'

'Read over your gentlewomen as it pleases you,' said Dee.

'I have gentlemen and gentlewomen, look you here.'

She brought a little book out of her pocket and pointed to a picture in it.

'Isn't this a pretty man?'

'What is his name?'

'My mother says his name is Edward, look you, he has a crown upon his head. My mother says that this man was Duke of York.'

She looked at a picture in the book of a man with a coronet in his hand and a crown upon his head.

'This was a jolly man when he was king of England.'

'How long ago is it that he was king of England?' Dee asked.

'Do you ask me such a question? I am but a little maiden. Here is his father, Richard Plantagenet, and his father also.'

'What do you call him?'

'Richard, surely this was Richard, Earl of Cambridge.'

She turned the pages and said, 'Here is a grim lord, he makes me afraid.'

'Why does he make you afraid?'

'He is a stern fellow, I do not know what he is. But this was the Duke of Clarence. This was father to Richard, Earl of Cambridge. Here is Anne his wife.' She turned over the leaf and said, 'The same man was heir to all Mortimer's lands. Edmund was her brother. Lo, sir, here are the wicked Mortimers.' She turned over several pages and then she said, 'This is Roger Mortimer. My mother says this man was Earl of the Marches. This is his wife. He had a great deal of land by her for she was an heiress. This is wild Genvill, her father. Here is a town they call Weobley. Here is Bewdley. Here is Mortimer's Cleobury. Here is wild Wenlock. Here is Ludlow. Here is Staunton Lacy. Genvill's wife was an heir of all these. Here is Hugh Lacy her father. He wears his hair long for he was deputy of Ireland. That makes him look with such a writhen face. My sister has torn out the other two leaves. I will bring them when you have supped. Please, do not tell anybody of me.'

At this point, Dee recorded, we were earnestly called to supper by my folks. But as soon as they had eaten they went back to Madini.

She had given them an historical tour through the Marches, the western reaches of Herefordshire and Shropshire, the border country between England and Wales, country that

Kelly might possibly have known from growing up in neighbouring Worcester. It was country that Dee had visited ten years earlier in 1574, when he travelled through Wales, the Marches and Hereford.

10

As soon as they had eaten they resumed. Madini delivered information on genealogies. It was a subject that deeply engaged Dee, and his library contained a large number of genealogical manuscripts. This was applied history, not antiquarianism: genealogical records were used to establish property rights. It was also a subject that interested Laski, especially since it had been revealed in Poland that the majority of the ancient Polish coats-of-arms had a foreign derivation.

‘Here is William Lacy, father to Hugh. Here is Richard’s father. And here is Sir Richard’s father, and here is William, Sir Richard’s brother. Here is his going into France.’

‘What year?’ Dee asked.

‘I promise you my eldest sister will tell you all. Here is his going into Denmark. My sister will come shortly and tell you how he married in Poland, and what issue this William had.’

Spirit seemed to be saying that Laski was a descendant of the Lacys, the Norman family that built Ludlow Castle and controlled the border region of England and Wales in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

‘Please declare the pedigree down to this Albert Laski,’ Dee requested.

‘Alas, I cannot tell what is done in other countries.’

‘I know you are not particular to this country but universal for all countries in the whole world, which is indeed but one country, or a great city, etc.,’ said Dee.

‘Well, my sister will shortly come and tell you unlooked for if you judge these things well that I have spoken. For they are the truth. The Mortimer I spoke of is the first of the six; there were six Mortimers who were Earls of the Marches. Edmund was the last and Roger the first: that Mortimer was the grandfather’s grandfather of this Edmund.’

Someone called her.

‘I am coming,’ she said. She took up her scrolls on the ground, of which some were very old, and she closed her book.

‘This may stand you in some stead,’ she said.

11

Dee was not the only person Laski consulted about his pedigree. He also commissioned

Sir John Ferne to investigate the history of the Lacys. Whether or not this was prompted by the spiritual information is unknown. In 1586 Ferne published *The Blazon of Gentry*, 'comprehending discourses of arms and of gentry wherein is treated the beginning, parts and degrees of gentleness, with her laws; of the bearing and blazon of coat arms, of the law of arms and of combats.' The second part of the volume dealt with the history of the Lacy family.

The book is in the form of a dialogue, and at the beginning Paradin announces he has now given up the study of genealogy and heraldry in favour of alchemy.

Torquatus responds: I know it well, you have within these few months at the request of a noble person which came into our country, set down a discourse of arms, with the antiquities, and descents of sundry noble houses of England, yea and those of the greatest antiquity also: but in my opinion, your labour was as evil bestowed on him as could be.

Paradin: I do not well understand your speech.

Torquatus: Remember you not, how that great expectation was with us, for the arrival of a noble personage, from out the north parts of Germany, and to be of such magnificence and state in all his actions, of such valour in the wars, of such liberality in his rewards, as never the like came into this land? What, have you forgotten him, which affirmed himself to be one of the reliques of that decayed and ancient family, the Chattelaines of Chester?

Paradin: Oh sir, now I see you intend the Palatine of Sieradz, a noble personage, excelling in many and commendable practices, descended of great birth, in the little province of Laško: who has been of great fame, I assure you, through his former merits, done in behalf of his country, throughout the nations of Moscow, Lithuania, Scythia and Transylvania, with the rest of those frozen and northern countries, as their own histories have truly recorded.

Torquatus: He is the man, whose greatness and worthiness you say, is recorded in the histories of his nation: yet his behaviour towards us, declared none of these. But is it evident that he is of English blood: some said that divers presumptions there were which might infer no less: but I think you revealed not to him any such probabilities? Yet some reported you should, which moved me to talk with you concerning the same.

Paradin: Many a man has been belied: I would not wish you to give credit to any such tale, for in so doing I might be worthily condemned of great rashness or folly: my book is extant and I think there is not any person that can justly accuse me of any such escape.

Torquatus: Indeed your book is forthcoming, but those which have it I warrant you can descant upon it at their pleasure.

Paradin: I know no man of wisdom or skill can upon any just ground pick a quarrel or cause of offence: yet men may devise and carp, according to their fantasies. But I know, I have

not in the whole discourse, either forged anything untruly, or without authority: nor yet opened any such gap (as in truth I know none) which might give so strange a guest occasion or colour to challenge a kindred, where I think he has none. In truth I wrote a discourse (according to his honourable request) wherein I did in some part open the descents of the English Lacys with their arms, their marriages and lives: whereof if any person can peevishly misconstrue any part of my work, I desire but that he would call me to my defence: for it is injustice to condemn the absent without his answer.

A marginal note states: 'The author stands upon his integrity as concerning the genealogy of Lacy written in the Latin tongue at the instance of the said nobleman.'

It seems the Ferne failed to establish any English ancestors for Laski. Had this produced a breach between Laski and Ferne? Had Laski's famed generosity failed to materialise when the results were not as he had hoped?

12

June 2, 1583, Kelly saw a spiritual creature standing on the table beside the silk cloth on which the stone stood as they waited for instruction. He seemed like a husbandman all in red apparel, red hose close to his legs, a red jacket, a red buttoned cap on his head, and red shoes. He asked Kelly how he was.

'Well, I thank God,' Kelly answered.

'By your clothes it seems you have something to say concerning the commons of this realm and not of high school points or science,' said Dee, ineffably English for all his Welsh descent, making his inevitable class assumptions on the basis of dress. 'I am desirous to know who sent you. What is your message and what is your name? For you have your own name like all creatures.'

The spiritual creature paused a long time, at which Dee asked him if he considered his speeches.

'I consider your speeches, for I have left nothing behind.'

Then he knelt down and seemed to pray in a strange language. 'Oh Gahire Rudna gaphna oh Gahire.' After which he repeated Dee's questions back at him. 'Have you not said from whom you come? What is your message? And have you urged my name, saying all things have a name? It is true. For so they have because they are. Have you left anything unsaid?' And then he gave warning of the end of the world.

'The seven doors are opened. The seven governors have almost ended their government. The earth labours as sick, sick unto death. The waters pour forth weepings and have not

sufficient moisture to quench their own sorrows. The air withers for her heat is infected. The fire consumes and is scaled with its own heat. The bodies above are ready to say, we are weary of our courses. Nature would fain creep again into the bosom of her good and gracious master ...

‘Hell itself is weary of earth. Why? The son of darkness comes now to challenge his right; and seeing all things prepared and provided desires to establish a kingdom for himself, saying, we are now strong enough, let us now build a kingdom upon earth and now establish what we could not confirm above. And therefore, behold the end.’

Then he gave specific information about Laski.

‘Whom you say that you have not yet confirmed, confirm with good counsel. It is said I have accepted him. Is this news not sufficient? It is said, he shall govern a people for me; of himself he cannot. Therefore let him believe, and secondly rejoice that the angel of God has so governed him that in election he shall govern a people. Does he desire to hear of greater blessedness? He has also said, then it shall be said to him, oh king. It follows consequently that he is called, and to a kingly office. For whoever is anointed in the lord, his kingdom is for ever.

‘Will he be the son of perdition? Let him then with his father put on the garments of pride. Does he desire news? Tell him you have prayed for him; the devil envies him and his estate. Tell him I say so. Say it is a shame for a king’s son to commit theft; and for him that is called, to do the works of unrighteousness. Do you study to please him? Give him sharp and wholesome counsel. For in him, I say, the state and alteration of the whole world shall begin.’

Then he gave his name.

‘He who says thus (I speak of myself and concerning my message) is equal with the greatest angels and his name is Murifri. You have written my name and I am of your calendar, because your calendar is of God. In the grounds of all your tables you will find my name.’

‘I do not remember any such name written by me,’ said Dee, ‘but it may be contained in some new composition or collection.’

‘It is true,’ said Murifri, ‘for if you had remembered all those things which you have written, then my message would not be needed.’

Then Dee asked for help in two other matters. They were not of the world of politics and power, but they were no less part of his daily concerns, consultations that people had with him.

‘If I might without offending you, I would move two petitions to you, one concerning the soul and the other concerning the body. Concerning the soul is one for Isabel Lister, whom the

wicked enemy has for long sore afflicted with dangerous temptations and has brought her knives to destroy herself with. She has resisted till now and desires my helping counsel which how small it is God knows. The other is of another woman who has great need and is driven to maintain herself, her husband and three children by her hand labour, and there is one that by dreams is advertised of a place of treasure hidden in a cellar which this woman has hired consequently and has hired it only till midsummer. She and this dreaming maiden dug a bit and found certain tokens notified to her, but then left off. I would gladly have your help in these matters if it pleased God.'

'I answer you,' said Murifri. 'I will come again soon and you shall receive a medicine which will teach you how to help in the first case. The second is vanity for it is not so, but to the intent that, after great hope of this world has infected the weakling's mind, desperation might have the more open and ready entrance. But yet she shall be comforted for your sake.'

Did Dee wonder about his own great hopes of hidden treasure, did he consider they too might be deluded and desperate?

After supper Murfiri returned with instructions for making a seven sided lamin, a charm, of symbols and numbers.

'Form this upon a plate of lead. It prevails as a cure against such infections. My promise is done.'

'How is this to be used?' Dee asked.

'Use it upon the body molested, adding the letters of her name in a small circle on the back half; not the letters in their forms expressed, but the number of such letters.'

'We do not know how to number her name in our letters.'

'Take them out of the second table (any other table of the seventh will serve) so that you take the numbers as you find them placed with the letters.'

'How is this to be used about her body?'

'As by discretion shall be thought best.'

The second table did not serve, Dee records, and therefore I used the seventh where all the letters might be had.

14

Wednesday, June 5, 1583, around two o'clock.

Kelly had ever since nine o'clock in the morning been in a marvellous great disquietness of mind, fury and rage because his brother Thomas had brought him news that a commission was out to attach and apprehend him as a felon for coining money. Secondly, that his wife was

gone from Mrs Freeman's house at Blockley and Mr Husey had reported him to be a cozenor and had used very bitter and grievous reports of him lately; and that his wife was at home with her mother at Chipping Norton.

Whereupon, writes Dee, considering his great disorder and encumbrance toward him externally and his great offending of God with his furious impatience internally; and remembering the whole premises of God's services to be performed by us two (if we would be dutiful servants to his divine majesty) I was touched with a great pang of compassion, both that any Christian should use such speeches as he had used, or be of so revengeful a mind and intent as he showed himself to be. And also in respect of my own credit being brought in doubt for embracing the company of such a one, a disorderly person. And thirdly, that the good service of God might by this be taken away from our executing to our great danger both of body and soul.

Kelly's reaction is interesting. Wouldn't fear have been the most likely response to the news of an impending arrest for coining money? Perhaps disquietness of mind implies fear. But Dee stresses fury and rage. Is that the reaction of a man caught out? Or of a man who suspects that he has been set up? Or is it guilty bluster? It is not clear when the coining was supposed to have occurred. Was it perhaps some old charge that had been held over him? The timing of events is interesting: two weeks after Laski visited Dee. And the incident itself has strange reverberations. Ten years later in Flushing Christopher Marlowe was similarly involved in a coining charge that was not all that it seemed to be, that overlapped with the duplicities of the secret service world around Catholic activists. Was this the pressure on Kelly to get him to spy on Laski? Coining was a serious charge, it was the sort of thing that might make a man want to leave the country. Was the intention behind it to encourage Kelly to commit himself to Laski and so get out of England? So that Burghley would have his man in central Europe? Laski had connections not only with Poland but also with the Habsburgs and the Holy Roman Empire. It is the timing that encourages the speculation, this dramatic event so soon after Laski had made contact; the timing, and Kelly's rage, rage at entrapment rather than a fear of arrest.

No arrest ever ensued. Were the charges dropped in exchange for a deal? Was the story not true, just a false rumour that Thomas Kelly had heard? Or did Kelly invent the coining charge as a persuasive reason for joining himself and Dee to Laski, seeing in Laski a more substantial form of patronage than anything offering in England?

In the margin Dee wrote, The charges were a mere untruth in every part thereof and a malicious lie. But it is not clear when he added that comment, nor on what grounds he made it,

whether that is Kelly's rebuttal, or based on information Dee was able to obtain through official channels, or just a personal conviction.

This episode, published in 1659 in the early pages of Meric Casaubon's edition of the spiritual transactions, is undoubtedly the basis for the subsequent frequently repeated claim that Kelly was convicted of coining and suffered ear-cropping as a punishment. As far as the records go, however, there is no evidence that there was any substance to the charge, or that any trial or punishment ensued. It is most unlikely that Dee would not have recorded a trial, conviction or punishment in either the spiritual transactions or his private diary, if such had taken place.

15

They set the show stone with the mystery in it on the table beside Kelly and after vehement and humble prayers awaited advice. Kelly heard a very loud noise around the show stone as though, he said, men were beating down mud walls, the thumping and shoving and cluttering were such.

Eventually outside the silk curtain one appeared on the table like a woman, having on a red kirtle and above that a white garment like an Irish mantle, on her head a round thing like a green garland, and like a coronet under the garland, but not clearly visible. On her breast was a precious stone of white colour and on her back another precious stone, both of which white stones were set upon a cross in the very centre of the cross.

'Your external apparel, you daughter of light, you perceive that we have somewhat noted,' said Dee. 'But by the power and mercy of the external light we trust and desire to understand something of your internal virtue.'

'What, do you think I am a jeweller's wife by my apparel?' she said. She gave them an address on pride, the greatest sin, she called it. She particularly addressed Kelly.

'Does the world not like you? It is for two causes. Either because you live well and not as a worldling, or else because your wickedness is such that the world wonders at it. If you are as the first, rejoice, for blessed are those whom the world hates. When they laugh at your godliness be sorry and grieve at their sinfulness. If you offend in the second way, fly hastily from the world. For in the world there is nothing to rejoice in. For she only provokes sorrow, whether it be of yourself or of another.'

'Your counsel is pretty good and your message merciful,' said Dee.

Kelly, however, was more combative.

'What can you accuse me of, for all your exhortation? Indeed I thank you heartily for your

exhortation and good counsel. But how unjustly I am misused at Husey's hand and so provoked to this extreme affliction of mind and unseemly speeches, you be the judge between Husey and me.'

'Whom the devil is a lord of he uses as his servants, and where his service may be greatest done, there is he most alleged. His subtleties are principal and great; and by these reasons I prove that Husey is easily to be infected, either with envy, malice, slander or dishonour of God's word. This is one of those assaults that is promised should assault you. Who is to be blamed, he that consents or he in whom the procurement is? You consented and chose him for a companion. Therefore do not be angry at his malice; for the fire that is, you have brought in with your own hands.'

Now it was time to separate from Husey.

'Peruse the Scripture, it is always seen that the spirit of God forces Satan in spite of his head to separate the evil from the good by discord, and in this the devil works against himself.'

As for the immediate danger of being arrested, 'attached', she warned Kelly: 'Truth it is that a commission is granted not only to inquire about you but also to attach you, and that by the council. If he goes down he shall be attached, therefore do not tempt God.'

'But if he stays here,' said Dee, 'and his being here so known as it is, it is likely that he will be attached here, to my no small grief or disgrace. What is your counsel on this?'

'It is written, misery shall not enter the doors of him whom the highest has magnified,' she said. 'The world shall never prevail against you.'

And then Dee asked again about the materials Kelly and Husey had found.

'In respect of the book, the scroll and the powder, what is your judgement or opinion, seeing when he was coming from Islington with them he was threatened to be pulled in pieces if he came with them to me?'

'All that is spoken of is wicked vanity. The book may be used to good purpose. They were wicked ones. But as these things are the least part of the action, so are they not much to be looked after.'

'As concerning the powder, I beseech you, what is your knowledge of it?' Dee persisted. Kelly had at last revealed the existence of the powder to him.

'It is a branch of nature's life. It is appointed for a time and to a purpose.'

'As concerning the samples of earth from the eleven places, what is now to be done with them?'

'It was a foresight of God. If they had been there now they would have utterly perished.'

'Oh, Jesus, that is a marvellous thing,' said Dee.

‘Helas, it is for nothing.’

‘They could not have perished in so short a time naturally,’ said Dee.

‘I have said.’

‘Tell us your name,’ demanded Kelly, who had had to travel to collect the samples.

‘If you will remember my counsel I will tell you my name.’

‘Your counsel was told me piecemeal so I cannot remember it but in general.’

‘You do, and have, and I am almost Hath.’

‘I understand you to be Ath, in the seal of Emeth,’ said Dee.

‘So am I in the number of God’s elect.’

‘Shall I not approach Mr Richard Young, as one of the high commissioners, to do my companion here some good?’ Dee asked.

Mr Justice Young, a close associate of Walsingham’s, specialized in interrogating suspected Catholics.

‘Trouble yourself when you need,’ said Ath, somewhat sharply. ‘Get your friends to give good reports of you. Do not come here in many years.’

16

The spirits were not always available. June 9, Dee prayed in his oratory and at his desk to have an answer or resolution of various doubts which he had noted down concerning the preparation of things about the table of practice and other things about the lamin and stone. But no answers were forthcoming.

He was afraid they had aroused the divine displeasure through some misbehaviour since the last session, though what that might have been he does not record. Finally, after a long time had passed one appeared in the very top of the frame of the show stone much like Michael.

‘Write, for I must be gone,’ he said. ‘There is silence in heaven for the governors of the earth are now before the lord, the doings of their seats are now disclosed, everything is noted. There is not this day anyone that governs the people upon earth whose government is not disclosed and whose government is not set open and his faults revealed. They without number cry, Lord, let thy vengeance come. The earth says, Be it so. Satan is before the lord. He has garnished himself with garlands as a conqueror and what he says is wonderful. Therefore the lord shall open his mouth and curse the earth and all living creatures. For iniquity has gotten the upper hand. Publicly the states of mankind in the world are condemned. We are silent and ready with our viols to pour the wrath of God upon them when he says, Be it so. Therefore be patient. For our patience is a universal silence.’

Madini and Ath were both female spirits. Dee had recorded their messages and taken them seriously. But according to specialists in the area like Johannes Trithemius, the abbot of Sponheim who had died some seventy years earlier, all female spirits were agents of the devil. When another female spirit appeared on June 14, Dee asked for some clarification.

‘We would gladly know your name,’ said Dee.

‘My name is Galva’h. In your language I am called Finis.’

She suddenly appeared as she said this.

‘That Finis is Latin,’ said Dee.

‘Yes.’

‘You are not one of those that are called *filia lucis*, or *filia filiarum*?’ Dee asked; daughter of light, or daughter of daughters.

‘No.’

‘You will not be offended if I propound a doubt somewhat impertinent to our matter in hand, yet of importance for us to hear your judgement on it? Trithemius says that there was never any good angel read of as appearing in the form of a woman. I pray you to give us an answer to this so great a cleric’s words which are to be read in his little book *Octo Quæstionum Maximiliani Cæsari*.’

Dee’s copy of the 1534 edition of *Eight Questions of the Emperor Maximilian*, acquired in 1561, survives in the university library at Cambridge. It is copiously annotated and underlined, especially in questions three to seven.

‘There he writes in question six,’ Dee quoted, ‘The manifestation of holy angels never varies. Without exception they always appear in male form. We nowhere read it written that a good spirit was seen in female form, or in that of any beast, but always under male appearance.’

‘You think I have some understanding?’ she asked, somewhat sardonically perhaps. After all, she was a female spirit. Would what she said be believed?

‘Yes, God knows, I do.’

‘First, it is evident that the spirits of God are incomprehensible to those that are their inferiors. For the higher order is incomparable to God, and by degrees those that are their inferiors are also incomparable to them. It follows therefore that in respect of that degree in angels things are incomprehensible.

‘Angels, I say, of themselves, are neither man nor woman. Therefore they take forms not according to any proportion in imagination, but according to the discreet and applicable will both of him and of the thing in which they are administrators. For we are all spirits administering the will of God. And to whom? To everything within the compass of nature, only to his glory and man’s use. It follows, therefore, considering that we do not minister of ourselves that we should minister in that unsearchable form within which our executions are limited.

‘But if Trithemius can say that woman also does not have the spirit of God, being formed and fashioned of the self-same matter, notwithstanding in a contrary proportion by degree; if Trithemius can separate the dignity of the soul of woman from the excellency of man only according to the form of the matter, then his argument might be good. But because in man and woman there is proportion, and preparation of sanctification in eternity, therefore those that are the external ministers of God in proportion to sanctification may take unto them the bodies of them both. I mean in respect of the form. For as in both you read *homo*, so in both you find one and the selfsame dignity in internal matter all one.

‘But Trithemius spoke in respect of filthiness with which all women are stained, and by reasons from the natural philosophers, as a man tasting more of nature indeed than of him who is the workman of a supernatural master. He, I say, concluded his natural invention. In respect of myself I answer Trithemius thus: I am *Finis*, I am a beam of that wisdom which is the end of man’s excellency. Those that are called *Filiae* and *Filiae Filiarum*, daughters and daughters of daughters, are also all comprehended in one and attend upon true wisdom, which if Trithemius marks, he shall perceive that true wisdom is always painted with a woman’s garment. For nothing is more commendable than the pureness of a virgin. God in his judgement knows how Trithemius is rewarded. If you think these arguments are not sufficient, the one in respect of the first ground and the other in respect of the measure of my name, I will yet allege greater.’

‘These arguments satisfy me,’ said Dee. ‘But to have something to stop the mouths of others who might cavil about such matters it was somewhat necessary to have heard your judgement. Whereas indeed our own affairs in hand are rather to be followed at present. And of greater arguments or instructions in this matter I trust to have understanding in the future.’

FIVE : OXFORD AND AWAY

1

June 10, 1583, Laski visited Oxford. Queen Elizabeth had instructed the chancellor to arrange a reception for him ‘according to his quality.’ The cost to the university and the colleges was £277, according to the bill of the vice-chancellor.

Holinshed records the occasion: ‘Touching the entertainment which he had at Oxford, and how the university did congratulate him, it is somewhat worth the noting. In the month of June, the said Albert de Lasko, coming from the marriage of the Lord Norris’s daughter, with Sir A. Paulet’s eldest son at Rycote he put himself on the way to Oxford, whereof the university (Dr Hovenden then vice-chancellor, and Mr Leison with Mr Edes, proctors) having intelligence, provided for his convenient receiving; insomuch, that in the way to Oxford, there met him Dr Westphaling, who greeted him with a pithy salutation. In like sort did the mayor and his brethren, in whose behalf for the whole city, the town clerk a worshipful master of art, pronounced his short and sententious speech in Latin, not without some gratulatory gift from that corporation. On the East gate whereat he entered, stood a consort of musicians, who for a long space made very sweet harmony, which could not but move and delight:

‘Inscia plebs populusque arrectis auribus astat,

‘Dulciferumque rudi suscipit aure melos.

‘All up the High Street to St Mary’s church, on either side the way, were decently marshalled scholars in their gowns and caps, bachelors and masters in their habits and hoods. At St Mary’s the orator of the University (notable in his faculty) presented him a book, in which were closely couched very rich and gorgeous gloves. From thence he marched to Christ’s Church, where he was whilst he abode in the university most honourably entertained. And the first night being vacant, as in which he sought rather rest in his lodging than recreation in any academical pastimes, strange fireworks were showed in the great quadrangle besides rockets and a number such manner of devices.

‘On the second day, his first dinner was made him at All Souls College, where (besides dutiful receiving of him) he was solemnly satisfied with scholarly exercises and courtly fare. This night and the night ensuing, after sumptuous suppers in his lodging, he personally was present with his train in the hall, first at the playing of a pleasant comedy entitled *Rivals*, then at the setting out of a very stately tragedy named *Dido*, wherein the Queen’s banquet (with Aeneas’ narration of the destruction of Troy) was lively described in a marchpane – marzipan – pattern; there was also a goodly sight of hunters with full cry of a kennel of hounds, Mercury

and Iris descending and ascending from and to a high place, the tempest wherein it hailed small confects, rained rose-water, and snow an artificial kind of snow, all strange, marvellous and abundant. Most of the actors were of the same house, six or seven of them were of St John's and three or four of other colleges and halls.

'His second dinner the third day was at Magdalen College, with oratory welcoming and bountiful feasting. His third dinner the fourth day at New College. The eloquent speech in Greek, Latin and Dutch – German – with his own unstudied answer thereunto, and all other before rehearsed, are not to be omitted: nor the public philosophy, physic and divinity disputations, in all which those learned opponents, respondents, and moderators, quitted themselves like themselves, sharply and soundly, besides all other solemn sermons and lectures.

'At afternoon the fourth and last day, he went towards Woodstock manor, and without the North gate by the way he was invited unto a banquet at St John's College, where the gates and outward walls overcovered with thousands of verses, and other emblematical poetries then offered him, argued their hearty goodwills: but his hasting to his journey's end caused him not to tarry the delicate banquet: yet only staying the delivery of a sweet oration and his own quick witty reply thereunto, he departed immediately, accompanied for a mile or two with the most of those reverend doctors and heads of houses all on horseback, where the orator again gave him an orator's farewell. And this is the sum of his entertainment, not delivered in such sort as the dignity of the same requires; howbeit sufficient for a sudden remembrance.' Bruno ever met Dee or

2

Amongst the topics in the public disputations were 'Whether males live longer than females' (Yes) and 'Whether divination is possible through the stars' (No). And amongst the participants was the 35 year old Giordano Bruno, 'the Nolan' as he called himself, after his home town. Bruno, like Dee, had a speculative intelligence and an interest in the spirit world. He was not well received at Oxford, as he recounted later in *La Cena de la Ceneri*.

'Go to Oxford and let them tell you what happened there to the Nolan when he disputed publicly with those doctors of theology in the presence of the Polish prince Laski and others of the English nobility. Learn how ably he replied to the arguments; how the wretched doctor who was put forward as the leader of the academy on that grave occasion came to a halt fifteen times over fifteen syllogisms, like a chicken amongst stubble. Learn with what incivility and discourtesy that pig' – Dr John Underhill, Rector of Lincoln College and a close associate of

Walsingham's – 'behaved, and the patience and humanity of him who showed himself to be born a Neapolitan and nurtured under a more benign sky. Hear how they closed his public lectures on the immortality of the soul and on the five-fold sphere.'

The English ambassador in Paris had written to Walsingham at the end of March 1583: 'Dr Giordano Bruno Nolano, a professor in philosophy intends to pass into England, whose religion I cannot commend.' Shortly afterwards Bruno established himself in London in the household of the French ambassador, Castlenau. A lapsed Dominican monk, a thinker who speculated on the existence of an infinity of other worlds, a man suspected by the Vatican of practising magic, Bruno shared with Dee and Kelly a dangerous fascination with forbidden subjects. These might well have drawn him to Laski, or vice versa. One report of his visit to Oxford has him 'in the train of' Laski.

It has been speculated that Bruno was working as an informer for Walsingham, involved, amongst other activities, in monitoring Laski. Certainly there was a Walsingham agent in the French ambassador's household at this time. He sent reports under the name of Henry Fagot and helped reveal the Throckmorton plot to put the Catholic Mary Queen of Scots on the English throne. Whether or not Bruno was Fagot is a matter of conjecture and interpretation. It is generally held to be unlikely. But the name was a grim precognition of Bruno's end, condemned to death by the Vatican for heresy and burned on the faggots in 1600.

3

On June 14, when Laski was returning from Oxford, Dee had asked Galvah about Laski's affairs.

'Ask me these things tomorrow,' Galvah had said.

But the next day Kelly spent almost all the afternoon angling when, Dee complained, 'I was very desirous to have had his company and helping hand in this action.'

Was Kelly angling for fish or did he have bigger catch in mind from the River Thames? Had he taken up a post on the river to make sure of seeing Laski's arrival in the royal barge? Or to be out of the house when the party arrived? Is that why the message had been to ask tomorrow? Or had spirit directed him there without his conscious plan?

Dee's diary records the visit. 'June 15, about five of the clock came the Polish prince Lord Albert Laski down from Bisham, where he had lodged the night before, being returned from Oxford where he had gone of purpose to see the universities, where he was very honourably used and entertained. He had in his company Lord Russell, Sir Philip Sidney, and other gentlemen: he was rowed by the Queen's men, he had the barge covered with the Queen's

cloth, the Queen's trumpeters, etc. He came of purpose to do me honour, for which God be praised!'

There is no mention of Bruno. He may have stayed at Oxford. He may not have been with the party on the barge, though he did come to know Philip Sidney, and dedicated to him several of the books that he published in England at this time. The others he dedicated to Castlenau, the French ambassador. There is no record that Bruno ever met Dee or Kelly. Given the overlap of their interests and acquaintances, it is a striking absence.

4

As soon as the barge had departed for London, Dee consulted Galvah again. The session began at six o'clock but it was half an hour before anything appeared.

First of all Il came, mocking Kelly for his fishing.

Then Galvah came and told Kelly, 'And to you sir, you were best to hunt and fish after truth.'

Finally Dee asked the questions that were preoccupying him. 'Truly the occasion of my asking you some questions now arose from matters concerning this noble Pole, of whom you told us yesterday ask today.'

'Vanity does not bang at my elbow. Do you believe what has already been spoken? Spoken, I say, of him.'

'Yes, indeed, I believe it,' said Dee.

'I say to you, his name is in the book of life. The sun shall not pass his course before he is a king. His counsel shall breed alteration of this state, yea, of the whole world. What would you know of him?'

'If his kingdom shall be in Poland, or what land otherwise.'

'Of two kingdoms.'

'Which, I beseech you?'

'The one you have repeated, and the other he seeks as right.'

'God grant him sufficient direction to all things so as may please the highest in his calling.'

'He shall want no direction in anything he desires.'

'As concerning the troubles of next August, and the dangers then, what is the best for him to do? To be going home before, or to wait here?'

'Whom God has armed, no man can prevail against.'

'In respect of my own state with the prince, how much has he prevailed to win me due

credit? And in what case stands my suit, or how am I to use myself therein?’

What was Dee’s suit, and how was Laski helping with it?

‘I have told you that at large even now and if you look into those things that are now told and are now done.’

‘Concerning Charles Sled’s nose gushing with blood twice last night and this morning at my giving him charitable instructions in virtue and godliness ...’

‘I do not know him; nor does he have any name with us.’

‘Does he mean well towards me?’

‘Whatever a wicked man means it is not well. But in the sense it is demanded, he means well. The evil spirit that possesses him was cast out of him, even at his nose, in the presence of those that were present with you. Believe me, we do not know his name. Do not trouble me any more with him.’

‘Oh Lord, though men be frail, faulty and filthy,’ said Dee, ‘yet your mercies are most praiseworthy among all generations of all your doings.’

‘Hold your peace,’ Galvah responded. ‘We are not to execute the justice of God.’

When spirits denied any knowledge of someone it was a bad sign; a sign that the person in question had some negative orientation, a commitment or attachment to darker forces. The presence of one of Walsingham’s long time informers like Sled in Dee’s household, especially at this occasion of Laski’s visit, was ominous. Kelly had already had a confrontation with him earlier in the year. The nose bleed was a disturbing, dramatic incident. Dee clearly had his suspicions or he would not have asked if Sled was well intentioned. What with the warrant out to arrest Kelly and the net of informers around Dee and Laski, these were dangerous times.

Four days later, June 19, Dee records, ‘the Lord Albert Laski came to me and lay at my house all night.’

5

They held a consultation before Laski arrived. Kelly wanted to cause personal apparitions of some reprobate spirits for Laski in Dee’s study, to show some examples of his skill in such things. But Dee would not agree to it.

‘Whoever takes servants of the wicked to prove the glory of God is accursed,’ said Galvah. ‘But oh, Satan, how many are your deceits.’

She went on to assure them about Laski.

‘It is said, before he goes from here I will pour water into him and my angel will anoint him as I have determined. Therefore hide nothing from him. For you belong to him. Nor can

flesh and blood work those things that I have glorified in him.'

'The prince would gladly know,' said Dee, 'whether it would be best for him to be going homeward at the first opportunity.'

'It shall be answered soon, and whatever other questions he asks.'

'May he be present here at the action?'

'Those that are of this house are not to be denied the banquet within.'

'May I request you to cause some perceivable apparition to appear to comfort him and to establish his mind more abundantly in the service of God?'

'If you follow us, let him be governed by us. But whatever is of the flesh is not of us.'

She seems to weep, said Kelly.

'You perceive how he understands the Lord Treasurer's grudge against him,' said Dee. 'And perhaps some others also are of the same malicious nature. What danger may follow hatred or encumbrance?'

'The sum of his life is already appointed, one jot cannot be diminished. But he that is almighty can augment his pleasure. Let him rejoice in poverty. Be sorry for his enemies. And do the works of justice.'

6

That same afternoon, Wednesday, June 19, at five o'clock, they held another action with Laski present. Eventually, Kelly reported, there appeared in the air before Laski an angel with a white robe holding a bloody cross in his right hand, the same hand also being bloody. Then he came from behind Laski and stood on the table, turning himself to all the four quarters of the world, and kneeling down and praying.

'Oh God, why should the people upon earth rejoice, or in what should the pleasures of their sensual delights be fixed? Why does the moon hold her course? Or why are the stars observing an order? Why are the people thus scattered abroad? Because iniquity has caught the upper hand. The doors of our God are polluted with blasphemy, his temples desolate, his commandments violated and his glory accounted nothing ...'

'I pray you declare your name to us,' Dee requested.

'My name is Jubanladace.'

'If I should not offend you, I would gladly know of what order you are, or what your state is in respect of Michael, Gabriel, Raphael or Uriel.'

'To men, according to their deserts and the first excellency of their soul, God has appointed a good governor or angel from amongst the orders of those that are blessed,' said

Jubanladace. 'I am one who is the keeper and defender of this man present, who carries the triumph and ensign of victories continually before him, as a reproach to my adversary, and his, and to confirm the dignity unto which he is called by the presence of this character.'

'Now he heaves up the cross,' said Kelly.

'I have also sealed the same in his heart. For unto him belong great victories, in the name and for the name of God. The Jews in his time shall taste of this cross, and with this cross he shall overcome the Saracens and Paynims. For I will establish one faith, says the lord of justice, that I may be known to be the same that I was first among all people. Moreover I will open the hearts of all men, that he may have free passage through them and will not suffer him to perish with the violence of the wicked. I will hereafter visibly appear to him and will say, "This is to be done." But a year is not yet come and these things shall be finished. But thus says the lord, I have hindered him because he has listened to the provocations of those that are wanton, and he has consented to those that blasphemed my name. Bid him look to the steps of his youth and measure the length of his body, so that he may live better and see himself inwardly.'

At this instant Tanfield, Laski's man, came rashly upon us, into my study, Dee records, we thinking that the study door had been shut, the Lord Laski being gone out of my study the other way through my oratory to take Tanfield's message from the court, and having despatched him rested outside. And Tanfield having commendations to me, as he said, from some at London, fearing lest he should be sent away without delivering these, came indiscreetly upon us, to our no little amazement and grief, fearing his rash opinion afterwards of such things that he could not perceive properly that my companion and I were doing. At which Jubanladace gave this sentence or declared thus the fatal end of Tanfield.

'It is said, he that enters in thus rashly, lo, five months are yet to come and fishes of the sea shall devour his carcase.'

It is not known whether Tanfield did indeed suffer such a fate, which seems a rather severe punishment for an accidental intrusion. But perhaps it was not accidental, perhaps Tanfield burst in deliberately to discover what was going on, perhaps spirit, or Kelly, knew there was more to Laski's man than met the eye. At Greenwich, on July 1, 1583, a grant of protection had been issued to William Tanfield to secure him from arrest for debt during his attendance on Laski. It seems likely that Tanfield was one of those figures in financial or legal trouble, granted protection from arrest in return for doing the state some service, the classic informer.

Then Jubanladace gave a warning about William Cecil, Lord Burghley's, dislike of Laski.

'Cecil hates him to the heart and desires he were gone from here. Many others secretly

sting at him. I cannot properly say sting him. But I say I will pour down my wrath upon them and they shall be confounded in the midst of their own iniquity. Let my faithful live and be like the fruitful vineyard.'

'For his return home, what is your advice?' asked Dee. 'Perhaps he wants necessary provision and money.'

'He shall be helped here and elsewhere miraculously. I speak as if it were to him. Let him go as soon as he conveniently can.'

'I say again,' said Dee, 'perhaps he wants money, but the treasures of the lord are not scant to those he favours.'

'His help shall be strange which has not been often seen. The Queen loves him faithfully and has fallen out with Cecil about him. Leicester flatters him. His doings are looked into narrowly. But I always inwardly direct him and I will minister such comfort to him as shall be necessary in the midst of all his doings. When this country shall be invaded, then you will pass into his country and by this means his kingdom shall be established again. This is more than my duty. This is the first time he has been here and it is wonderful. The second coming is not long away, and then he will be wonderful. I leave off, the wicked one oppresses. He is now destitute of me.'

As soon as he had said this sentence he seemed to sink through the table like a spark of fire and seemed to make haste to his charge, the Lord Laski. Whereby, remarked Dee, we perceive the frailty of man to be great when he is destitute of his good angel.

7

Saturday, June 29, 4 p.m.

While I was about to write the title of the second side of the seventh leaf, and E. K. sitting by me, Madini appeared as before like a young girl and I saluted her in the name of God as coming from God for good, and said to her that I was wonderfully oppressed with the work prescribed to me to perform before next August, and desired her to help me to find someone to write the holy book as it ought to be written, seeing I did all I could and it seemed almost impossible for me to finish it as it is required. Madini promised to help me to one to write the book, and thereupon her mother appeared to her, though unseen by E. K. Madini said also that she was now learning Greek and Arabic and the Syrian tongue.

'Mother, please let him have me to write his book,' said Madini.

'Please tell me, Madini,' said Dee, 'what was his name who yesterday tempted my friend and accused me most unduly and untruly to E. K. as a murderer and hypocrite and one that had

injured a thousand.'

'His name was Panlacarp.'

'Can wicked conjurors have their devils to write books at their command, and shall not an honest Christian philosopher have the help of God's good angels to write his holy mysteries so greatly redounding to his glory? And seeing you are the mother of Madini here, I beseech you tell me your name, as the order of all our doings are distinctly and orderly noted.'

'I am of the word and by the word. I say, seal up those things you have and I myself will take charge of Galvah to the end to avoid scandal.'

'True it is,' said Dee, 'it must grow to a great misliking grudge that God should seem to have laid greater burdens on our shoulders than we can bear; and then if we fall and fail under them he would find a cause not to perform his promises made for carrying those burdens.'

'Whatever is your part, I will perform. I will put your yoke on my shoulders in this one thing.'

'Will you then write it as I should have written it?'

'I have said I will.'

'Where shall I leave the book?'

'Leave it where you like. Your locks are no hindrance to us. When the time comes, believe and you will find it written.'

'You have eased my heart of a thousand pound weight.'

'Because you shall not fall into error. Do you believe?'

'Yes, certainly,' said Dee.

'Then certainly I will do it. Your faith will be the instrument of my working. It will, and you will see, and it will never perish.' And then she told her daughter, 'Maiden, say your lesson when I am gone.'

'Please tell me your name,' said Dee.

'Mother, please tell your name,' Madini asked her too.

'I am. What more do you want?'

At which she flew away like fire. Madini fell down prostrate on her face a while.

'Now I shall have time to follow my suit and to do all Mr Gilbert's business,' said Dee.

'My mother will speak to the Queen for you shortly,' said Madini. Then she asked Kelly, 'Please teach me to spell.' She began to speak, explaining to Dee, 'It is the Syrian tongue. You do not understand it.' Nor could Kelly understand it.

'Unless you speak some language which I understand I will express no more of this gibberish,' said Kelly. And at that she prayed for a while and then went.

Dee wrote down a passage in Greek characters. Transliterated it reads, 'This fellow will overthrow this work. His baggage is in readiness. And he endeavours very hard to withdraw himself from this common friendship. Take care you give him no occasion to. For he plots hard how by art and cunning he may leave you for ever.'

Was the passage in Greek characters a note written by Dee to himself? That hardly seems likely, but what else could it have been? Was it a spiritual message for Dee delivered by Kelly, but which Kelly himself could not read, a warning that Kelly was planning to leave him? But it was not actually in Greek, it was in English written in Greek characters, so if delivered orally by Kelly it would have been clearly intelligible in English. Unless it was delivered Greek letter by Greek letter, with Kelly knowing the names of the Greek letters but not their English equivalents. Or did Kelly in fact have some Greek while claiming not to? Was it a message of Kelly's to Dee, a threat to leave? But why would Kelly make such a revelation? If he was serious, why did he not speak directly? Or was it to authenticate the spiritual messages, by making them seem to be against Kelly's own interest and so, delivered by Kelly seemingly unwittingly, to be clearly authentic?

8

My heart throbbed many times today with the thought that E. K. intended to absent himself from me and now this warning confirmed my fears and assured me that it was so, wrote Dee at the end of the day's action. So seeing him making such haste to ride to Islington, I asked him why he so hastened to ride there. And I said, if it were to ride to Mr Harry Lee, I would go there also to be acquainted with him, seeing I now had the leisure, being relieved of writing the book.

Then he said that someone told him the other day that the duke merely flattered him, and told him other things, both against the duke and me, etc.

I answered for the duke and myself; and also said that if the forty pounds annuity which Mr Lee offered him was the chief cause of settling his mind that way, contrary to his many previous promises to me, then I would assure him of fifty pounds yearly and would do my best by following my suit to bring it to pass as soon as I possibly could, and I made him promise upon the Bible at this.

Then E. K. swore upon the same Bible constant friendship and never to leave me. And moreover he said that unless this had so fallen out, he would have gone beyond the seas, taking ship at Newcastle within eight days.

And so we pledged our faith to each other, taking each other by the hands upon these

points of brotherly and friendly fidelity for life, which covenant I beseech God to turn to his honour, glory and service and the comfort of our brethren, his children, here on earth.

9

Thursday, July 2, 2 p.m., while Dee was writing letters to Adrian Gilbert in Devonshire, Madini appeared by him in the study, first on the ground, then up in the air in front of Kelly who was sitting in the chair. Dee asked how Walsingham felt towards him, sensing there was a distance there.

‘How is the mind of Mr Secretary toward me? I think it is alienated marvellously.’

‘Those that love the world are hated of God. The Lord Treasurer and he are joined together and they hate you. I heard them when they both said you would go mad shortly. Whatever they can do against you, assure yourself of. They will shortly lay a bait for you. But avoid them.’

‘What bait? Who by?’ Dee asked.

‘They have determined to search your house. But they wait until the duke has gone.’

‘What would they search it for?’

‘They hate the duke, both of them unto death.’

‘Why?’

‘Take heed you deal uprightly,’ Madini warned Kelly.

‘God the creator be my witness of my upright dealing with and towards him ever since my last coming to him,’ said Kelly.

Did that mean that his earlier dealings with Dee were less than upright, that he had been in place as a provocateur or informer earlier, but no longer was? Or that he had simply been less than honest?

‘It is good to prevent diseases,’ said Madini.

‘By this book,’ said Kelly, taking the Bible into his hand, ‘I swear that I carry as faithful a mind to him as any man can, ever since my last coming.’

‘Look at the kind of people around the duke,’ said Madini, ‘and the manner of their diligence.’

‘What do you mean by that?’ Dee asked. ‘His own people do you mean? Or who?’

‘The spies.’

‘Which are those?’

‘All, there is not one true.’

‘You mean the Englishmen?’

‘You are very gross if you do not understand my sayings.’

‘Lord, what is your counsel to prevent all this?’

‘The speech is general. The wicked shall not prevail.’

‘But will they enter to search my house or not?’

‘Immediately after the duke goes they will.’

‘To what intent? What do they hope to find?’

‘They suspect the duke is inwardly a traitor.’

‘They can by no means charge me, no not with so much as a traitorous thought.’

‘Though your thoughts are good they cannot comprehend the doings of the wicked. In sum, they hate you. Do not trust them. They will go about shortly to offer you friendship. But be a worm in a heap of straw.’

‘Please, explain that parable.’

‘A heap of straw, no matter how great, is no weight upon a worm, even though every straw hinders the worm’s passages. See them and do not be seen by them, do you understand?’

‘Please make your counsel plainer.’

‘My counsel is plain enough.’

‘When is the duke likely to go away?’

‘In the middle of August.’

‘If he goes in the middle of August and our practices are still in hand then, what shall be done with our furniture that is prepared and standing in the chamber of practice?’

‘You have no faith. His going waits upon the determined purpose of God. He is your great friend and intends to do much for you. He is prepared to do you good and you are prepared to do him service.’

So was it already decided that they would leave with Laski? Had Dee resolved to go with him back to Poland? Was this why Kelly had been so uneasy, and planning to leave Dee’s service? Or had Kelly been planning to leave immediately, and alone? We do not know when Dee made the decision to attach himself to Laski, nor when Laski extended the invitation. But it seems that now the decision had been made.

‘As concerning Adrian Gilbert, what does it please you to say of him and his intended voyage?’

‘He is not in the true faith.’

‘How has it been said, then, that he should be the setter forth of God’s faith and religion among the infidels?’

‘That is a mystery.’

‘Which is best, that the duke comes here often or stays for the most part at his house in London?’

‘Human policy cannot prevail. As many as are not faithful in these causes shall die a most miserable death and shall drink of everlasting sleep.’

And then Dee began worrying about money.

‘I beseech you, how shall his provision of money from home serve his turn, or how shall he have help for bearing his charges?’

‘Your words make me a child,’ said Madini. ‘Those that fish for dolphins do not stand upon the ground. Those that sit in council do not call in the harvest people. He that stands above the moon sees greater things than the earth. Is it not said, the lord will provide? I stand above the moon for I dispose his life from above the dispositions of the moon. To ask what Jacob’s servants did was a folly, because their master was blessed. A greater question to ask would be how blessed he was, than to ask how many sheep he had.’

‘I would like to know what you meant by saying that my words made you a child,’ Dee asked.

‘Because you ask me childish questions.’

But Dee still had more questions.

‘Because it has been said that in the beginning of our country’s troubles we should be packing from here into this country, what token shall we have when that time is approaching or at hand?’

‘Your watchword was told you before. When it is said to you, come.’

‘But I ask you to be ready for that watchword, hearing what is to be done as concerning our wives and children into his country.’

‘Miraculous is your care, oh God, for those that are your chosen, and wonderful are the ways that you have prepared for them. You will take them from the fields and harbour them at home. You are merciful to your faithful and hard to the heavy-hearted. You will cover their legs with boots, and brambles will not prick them. Their hands will be covered with the skins of beasts so they can make their way through hedges. The bell will go before them as a watch and sure direction. The moon will be clear so that they may go on boldly. Peace be amongst you.’

When I came home yesterday from the court and from London and from Lord Laski, writes Dee, I found that E. K. was planning to ride out of town and intended to be away five

days, as he expressly told me. Certain companions and acquaintances of his having so arranged with him, some waiting for him in Mortlake and some at Brentford, as was perceived later this day and as he confessed to me. Whereupon I thought it best to indicate as much to Lord Laski who meant to come and refresh himself at my house as he had done before, either today or within the next two or three days; since he delighted in E. K.'s company also. So, about the time E. K. rose, I wrote these lines intending to send them immediately to the Lord Laski that word might be returned of his intentions before E. K. should leave, I meaning and hoping to persuade E. K. to wait that long and upon such respect.

Most noble prince, Dee wrote, on returning I found our Edward happy indeed, but preparing himself, so he says, for a journey of five days, planning to depart in the early morning and return, as he declares, after five days. What the truth is he knows who is our true and omnipotent God. I have pondered on this, this morning, to indicate to you that you may think about what is best to do. For the rest, at your convenience, the very faithful client of your highness, John Dee, July 4, 1583.

This letter being written and not yet folded up my friend E. K. was ready and came out of his chamber into my study and I told him that I was at this very moment sending word to the Prince Laski of his riding out and return in five days; and so showed him the letter; who, when he came to the phrase 'what the truth is' he was somewhat offended, saying, 'What secret meaning has this? Some previous discussion between you two ...'

'Truly,' I said, 'only what the circumstances of the letter import. That is, whereas you said you intended to return within five days, or at the same days' end, so it is uncertain whether you will, or shall, return later or sooner; and therefore what is the truth of your return, or intent to return, only God knows.'

He would by no means accept my sincere explanation, but seemed suspicious of some other undue construction of those words. Thereupon I took the letter and tore it in three pieces and sent nothing. But in my mind referred everything to God's disposal, assuring myself of God's most constant proceeding in his own affairs.

Shortly afterwards E. K. said to me, 'For certain here is a spiritual creature in my right shoulder who clearly says to me, "Come away."'

'So one said to Saul when they would have had him away to have drowned him, and I kept him in this study by force and so hindered the devil of his purpose then, as appears by that unhappy man being still alive.'

'No,' said E. K. 'they have told me that if I wait here I shall be hanged; and if I go with this prince he will cut off my head, and that you mean not to keep your promise to me. And so even

if I might have a thousand pounds to stay, yea of a kingdom, I cannot. Therefore I release you of your promise of fifty pounds a year stipend to me, and you need not doubt but God will defend you and prosper you, and can from the very stones raise up children to Abraham. And again, I cannot abide my wife, I do not love her, no, I abhor her; and I am disliked in this house because I treat her no better.'

To these words of his spoken in great pangs and disquietness of mind, I replied that these doings and sayings were not from God, and that by my whole proceeding he might perceive what confidence I reposed in his dealing with the spiritual, our friends; seeing I had laid out my last penny and more than I was able.

Well, all of a sudden, down he went, upon his mare, and away towards Brentford. After he had gone my wife came up into my study and I said, 'Jane, this man is terribly angry with his wife because of her friends' bitter reports against him behind his back and her silence at that, etc. He has gone. But I beg the almighty God to guide him and to defend him from danger and shame. I do not doubt that God will be merciful to him and bring him at length to such order as he shall be a faithful servant to God, etc.'

Within three hours later E. K. came up my study stairs unbooted, for he had come in a boat from Brentford. When I saw him I was glad inwardly, but I carried on writing up these records as I had yet to write of last Tuesday's actions.

'I have lent my mare out,' he said, 'and so am returned.'

'It is well done,' I said.

And at that he sat down in the chair by my table where he was used to sit; and it was ten o'clock then. He took up in his hand the books which I had brought from London from Lord Laski, written to him in commendation of him, etc. And as he was looking earnestly at them a spiritual creature patted the book on the outside parchment cover several times, and once would have taken it out of his hands. Several times I heard the strokes myself.

At length he said, 'I see here the handsome maiden Madini, and have done for quite a while.'

Then I said to him, 'Why didn't you tell me sooner?'

And at that I took up some paper in order to note what should seem noteworthy, as follows.

'Mistress Madini, you are welcome in God, for good I hope,' said Dee. 'What is the cause of your coming now?'

‘To see how you do.’

‘I know you see me often and I see you only by faith and imagination.’

‘That sight is truer than his,’ she said, pointing to Kelly.

‘Oh Madini, shall I have any more of these grievous pangs?’ said Dee.

‘Cursed wives and great devils are sore companions.’

‘In respect of the Lord Treasurer, Mr Secretary and Mr Raleigh, I pray you, what worldly comfort is there to be looked for? Besides that I do principally put my trust in God.’

‘Madder will stain, wicked men will offend and are easy to be offended.’

‘And being offended will act wickedly, to the persecution of those that mean simply,’ said Dee.

‘Otherwise they would not be called wicked,’ said Madini.

Madder was a plant cultivated for a dye made from its root. But what Burghley, Walsingham and Raleigh were up to is unclear.

‘As concerning Albert Laski’s pedigree, you said your sister would tell all.’

‘I told you more than all your dog painters and cat painters can do.’

‘You spoke of William Lasky and Sir Richard Lasky his brother; and from this William going into France and then into Denmark, and his marriage in Poland came this Albert Laski, now Palatine of Sieradz, etc.’

‘These were two pretty men for me to meddle with. When you set yourselves together and agree together I will make all agree together.’

Kelly asked her, ‘Madini, will you lend me a hundred pounds for a fortnight?’

‘I have swept all my money out of doors,’ she said.

‘As for money,’ said Dee, ‘we shall have what is necessary when God sees the time.’

‘Hear what I say,’ said Madini. ‘God is the unity of all things, love is the unity of every congregation, I mean true and perfect love. The world was made in the love of the father. You were redeemed in the love of the father and the son. The spirit of God is yet the love of his church.’ And then she asked Kelly, ‘What are you hunting after? Speak man, who do you hunt after?’

‘I hunt after nothing,’ said Kelly.

‘Do you love God?’ she asked. ‘Do you seek to be among his elect? Why then do you not love those things that are of God? This shows your lack of faith. Your bragging words are confounded. For you say, no man can accuse you of evil. But you have no faith because you have no hope. If you hate God, the reward is great; but the greatness is unquenchable fire. Whoever does not follow the commandments hates God. Do you love silver and gold? The one

is a thief, the other is a murderer. Will you seek honour?’

‘No,’ said Kelly.

‘So did Cain. But you have a just God who loves you. Just and virtuous men who delight in you. Therefore be virtuous. For you shall tread the world under your feet. I promise you, I have driven the scullion drab out of our kitchen long ago.’

‘Do you mean worldly covetousness?’ asked Dee.

‘Yes, and the first heavenly covetousness,’ said Madini.

Note, Dee added in the margin, some years later this came to pass in 1589, when he was made Baron of Bohemia in 1590.

12

And now Kelly was exorcised of his demons.

‘Carma geta Barman,’ Madini said.

‘What does that mean?’ Dee asked.

‘Veni ex illo Barma.’

Kelly felt and saw a spiritual creature go out of his right thigh.

‘Where are your fourteen companions?’ demanded Madini.

‘They live here.’

The one who came out seemed a great handsome man with a satchel of dog’s skin by his side and a cap on his head, etc.

‘Oh, the hand of the highest has done this,’ said Dee.

‘Come darkness, fly from my spirit,’ Madini ordered.

Fourteen evil spirits of various evil-favoured shapes appeared. Some like monkeys, some like dogs, some very hairy, monstrous men, etc. They seemed to scratch each other in the face. They seemed to go around Madini and say, ‘Gil de pragma kures helech.’

‘What does that mean?’ Dee asked.

‘We wish to dwell here within our own,’ Madini translated.

One of them said, ‘We have this man as our home.’

‘The vengeance of God is a two-edged sword and cuts the rebellious wicked ones in pieces,’ said Madini. ‘The hand of the lord is like a strong oak, when it falls it cuts in sunder many bushes. The light of his eyes expels darkness and the sweetness of his mouth preserves from corruption. Blessed are those whom he favours and great is their reward. Because you came here without licence and seek to overthrow the liberty of God’s testament and the light with which he stretches to the end, and because you are accursed it is said, I will not suffer

mine to be overthrown with temptation; though he was led away, behold I bring him back again. Depart to the last cry. There is no rest with the prince of darkness. Amen, go from here. And I shall seal you at the end.'

She sealed them all in the forehead, the fourteen and their leader. It was as if they had been branded. They sunk, all fifteen, down through the floor of the room and there came a thing like a wind and plucked them away by the feet.

'I think I am lighter than I was,' said Kelly. 'And I seem to be empty and to be returned from a great amazing. I do not properly remember what I have done or said this fortnight.'

'You are eased of a great burden,' said Madini. 'Love God, love your friends, love your wife.'

Then came one with a red cross in his hand and led her away, and they vanished.

Dee and Kelly prayed, reciting psalm fourteen of Roffensis, the psalm of thanksgiving, for Kelly's deliverance from Barma and his fourteen companions.

They thought for a while that Jubanladace had been sent to say something to them about his charge, Prince Laski. But I found in the end, Dee writes, that it was a token that the Prince Laski was pensively careful of us, and that his good angel was his witness and message, by that token, his specific character as was taught before. The character, the specific symbol, was the red cross held in his hand.

And that is the last account of any spiritual action by Dee and Kelly in England. Between July 4 and September 25 there are no further spiritual dialogues. Whether there were no more sessions, or whether there were records that are missing, is unknown.

13

In the English State Papers there survives a draft of a letter from Mr Secretary Walsingham to John Herbert, July 6, 1583. It expresses Walsingham's concern and puzzlement about what Laski was up to.

'The Palatine Alaski grows not as yet to any resolution touching his departure hence, which is found strange, having no other errand hither, as he gives out, than to see her Majesty honourable, and surely the gentleman has many good parts, which makes him gracious towards all men.'

John Herbert was sent to Poland in July to negotiate economic privileges for the English Eastland Company, also known as the North Sea Company, established in 1579 at Elbing. England was busily trying to establish a trading presence in the Baltic, and Poland was the focus of attention. Burghley's initial interest in Laski had been on the assumption that he had

some role in these economic matters, but it had gradually become clear that Laski was not visiting as a representative of the Polish king.

But if Laski's plans were still unclear, Dee's plans for departure seem to have been under way. July 7 Dee recorded in his private diary, 'George was dismissed my service and paid all reckonings in the presence of Goodman Hilton and Mrs Kelly in my study.' It looks like the household was being prepared for travel, and those who would not be coming were being paid off.

14

Dee now received a welcome gift from Queen Elizabeth to help him entertain Laski. He recorded the occasion in the *Compendious Rehearsal* of his life, written some nine years later in 1592.

'Her Majesty (anno 1583, the last day of July) being informed by the right honourable Earl of Leicester that whereas the same day in the morning he had told me that his honour and the Lord Laski would dine with me within two days after, I confessed sincerely to him that I was not able to prepare them a convenient dinner, unless I should immediately sell some of my plate or some of my pewter for it. Whereupon her Majesty sent to me very royally within one hour after forty angels of gold from Syon, where her Majesty had now come by water from Greenwich.'

15

What Kelly was doing during this time is not known, whether he was with Dee at Mortlake or with Laski in London or with his companions at Brentford. Two enigmatic entries in Dee's private diary are all we have. The first is partly illegible.

August 1, 'a Worcestershire man, a wicked spy came to my house: whom I used as an honest man, and found nothing being as I used. I was sent to E. K. etc.'

August 18, 'a great tempest of wind at midnight. E. K.'s very great anger against his wife.'

16

Meanwhile Sir Humphrey Gilbert had established the first English colony in North America. He sailed from Plymouth Sound on June 11, 1583, sighted Newfoundland on July 30, and on Monday, August 5, took possession of the harbour of St John and two hundred leagues every way in the name of the Queen.

But on September 9 he went down with his ship. He was last seen sitting with a book in his

hand. 'We are as near to heaven by sea as by land,' were his last recorded words.

17

A fortnight before leaving Mortlake for Europe, Dee drew up a catalogue of his library. What made him arrange this just as he was preparing to leave? Did he have a presentiment that some titles might go missing while he was away? Had spirit's warning that his house would be searched alerted him to the dangers of leaving his vast collection of books with no record of what it contained? Or was he compiling the list in order to borrow money on the surety of the collection? He had made an earlier catalogue in the late 1550s, but we do not know what prompted him to compile that, either.

The catalogue survives in two copies, both dated September 6, 1583. It lists 2,292 books and 199 manuscripts. Many of the books and manuscripts consisted of more than one title bound together with others, so the number of individual works is well in excess of 2,500 items. A note in the copy of the catalogue surviving in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge records that Andreas Fremonsheim 'bookseller in England for the Birkmanns of Cologne wrote this out at Mortlake, inspecting all the books themselves.'

The listing of the short titles and the dates of publication was a major task, and towards the end of the list of manuscripts the details become sketchy compared with the very detailed descriptions that began that section. There are another 169 manuscripts known to have been owned by Dee that are not included, so it may be that this part of the catalogue was not completed.

The list now in Trinity College was annotated by Dee after he returned to England in 1589. Some titles are marked T, some are marked Fr., and some have no mark. Against the fourth item in the catalogue Dee wrote 'Taken with me', and from this it can be assumed that T indicates the books he took with him to Europe. Fr. has been interpreted as Fremonsheim, the bookseller, or as Nicholas Fromond, Dee's brother-in-law who was entrusted with looking after Dee's house, library and possessions after Dee left.

Dee packed up 545 books and 52 manuscripts to take with him. The emphasis was on alchemical and Paracelsian works. He took two thirds of his bound alchemical volumes, nearly ninety percent of his bound Paracelsian titles, and nearly one hundred percent of his unbound ones. He took forty percent of his Hebrew titles, which may indicate an intention to work in cabbalistic areas. And he took forty percent of his grammatical books and dictionaries, to facilitate communication in Europe. The magical books mentioned in the spiritual transactions were also taken: Trithemius' *Eight Questions of the Emperor Maximilian*, Johann Reuchlin's

De Verba Mirifico, and one of his three copies of Cornelius Agrippa's *De Occulta Philosophiae*. He also took some of his own works for gifts and presentation: five copies of *General and Rare Memorials Pertaining to the Perfect Art of Navigation* and six copies of *Propædeumata Aphoristica*.

Dee entrusted his household possessions to his brother-in-law, Nicholas Fromond, and conveyed the message of the property to him for four hundred pounds, on condition that if he repaid the money he might re-enter it. Was the four hundred pounds for travelling expenses and maintenance while abroad? Or to discharge his debts in England? As he had told Kelly, he owed three hundred pounds. He owed Birkmanns, the booksellers, sixty-three pounds, thirteen shillings and eightpence farthing. His intention was that his brother-in-law should discharge the debt, but Fromond failed to do so.

Dee himself had failed to make secure arrangements for the £80 per annum income from the rectories of Upton-upon-Severn and Long Leadenham to be paid, and consequently never received it.

18

On Saturday, September 21, Dee's former pupil in alchemy, Sir Philip Sidney, married Frances Walsingham, daughter of Sir Francis Walsingham, Dee's neighbour, the Queen's secretary of state and head of the secret service. Walsingham himself was away in Scotland on government business. Queen Elizabeth disapproved of the wedding. Laski attended the wedding, but there is no record that Dee was present.

That evening Laski, Dee, and Kelly began their departure from England for Europe. Was the timing just coincidence? Are there ever coincidences in the environs of the secret service? Did Dee hope that Walsingham would be too preoccupied with the wedding to notice a sudden departure? Or did Walsingham think that the wedding would provide a convenient cover for Dee's departure? It might have been expected that Dee would have been present at the wedding; was that expectation part of the subterfuge?

Was the night journey all to do with the tides? Or was it intended as a discreet departure, maybe even a secret one? According to William Camden, Laski, 'after four months stay here, withdrew himself secretly, being run far in debt.'

Was Laski trying 'to prevent the coming on of creditors', as Anthony à Wood claims? 'That which in him was most observable, was his prodigality; for so far did he exceed his abilities, that being not able to keep within bounds,' writes Wood, 'he was forced at length to quit England.'

Wood cites Sir Richard Baker's report that Laski 'having tarried here four months, and run into much debt, he secretly withdrew himself and departed. This man I saw myself afterward in Kraków, very bare, though it was reported of him, that he had in a dowry with a wife, fifty castles of great value: but what mine can bear the charges of prodigality?'

But Holinshed's account makes no suggestion of any secrecy: 'now when he had well viewed the order of our English court and nobility; with other places of this realm, especially the university of Oxford, etc: taking leave of her Majesty and of the nobility, he departed towards Poland.'

Dee apparently had official permission to depart. In his *Apologetical* to the Archbishop of Canterbury, written in 1590, he recalled 'that my last voyage beyond the seas was duly undertaken by her Majesty's good favour and licence, as by the same words may appear in the letter written by the right honourable Lord Treasurer unto your grace on my behalf and her most excellent Majesty's willing his honour to do so.'

Perhaps the secrecy was for Kelly, escaping the counterfeiting charge. Or perhaps it was to give Laski the impression that Dee and Kelly were out of favour, burning their bridges, defecting. Maybe they were. Or maybe it was just meant to look that way, so Walsingham and Burghley could place their secret sources of information into Europe.

19

Certainly it has been speculated that Dee went to Europe as a government agent. In Robert Hooke's posthumous papers, published in 1705, there is a document in which Hooke suggests that the *Spiritual Transactions* were not spiritual at all, but encoded accounts of sensitive political materials Dee collected in Europe.

'I do conceive that the greatest part of the said book, especially all that which relates to the spirits and apparitions, together with their names, speeches, shows, noises, clothing, actions and the prayers and doxologies etc are all cryptography; and that some parts also of that which seems to be a journal of his voyage and travels into several parts of Germany, are also cryptographical; that is, that under those feigned stories, which he there seems to relate as matters of fact, he has concealed relations of quite another thing; and that he made use of this way of absconding it, that he might the more securely escape discovery, if he should fall under suspicion as to the true designs of his travels, or that the same should fall into the hands of any spies, or such as might be employed to betray him or his intentions; conceiving the inquisition that should be made, or prosecution, if discovered, would be more gentle for a pretended enthusiast, than for a real spy.'

‘What his designs or business with the Emperor, the King of Poland, and others was is hard to determine, i.e. first whether he were sent upon some private message by the Queen, or any of the ministers of state, to inquire into and discover the secret designs of that court, is hard now to determine, but ’tis likely.’

’Tis likely, perhaps. But Hooke provides no decodings of the alleged cryptography. Nonetheless, the speculation is not an impossible one. The third volume of Trithemius’ *Steganographia*, ostensibly a sequence of tables for summoning up spirits, has now been revealed to be a work of cryptography. This was the book that Dee had tried to obtain for Burghley in 1563.

20

September 21, Dee records in his diary, ‘we went from Mortlake, and so the Lord Albert Laski, I, Mr E. Kelly, our wives, my children and family, we went toward our two ships attending for us, seven or eight mile below Gravesend.’

Dee now had three children, Katherine, Arthur and the seven month old Rowland. It was not an easy departure from England. Dee describes it in the spiritual transactions.

The Lord Albert Laski, Voivode of Sieradz in Poland, meeting me on the water as we had appointed; and so brought night to London; and in the dead of the night, by wherries, we went to Greenwich to my friend Goodman Fern the potter’s house, where we refreshed ourselves, and a great tilt boat came there from Gravesend to take us in, by appointment of me and Mr Stanley, to go to our ships, which he had caused to lie seven or eight miles beyond Gravesend. To which ships we came on Sunday morning by sunrise. In the greater of them, being a double fly-boat of Denmark, my Lord Laski, I and E. K. with my wife and children, etc, went. And in another ship, also hired by me for this passage, went some of my lord’s men, two horses, etc. That ship was a boyer, a pretty ship. With little wind we straightway hoisted sail and began our voyage.

September 22. This day we were in great danger of perishing on the sands, called the spits, about midnight. We had, by force of a contrary wind, anchored by them, and the anchor came home, no-one perceiving it, till the ship was ready to strike on the sands. Then upon great diligence and policy used by our mariners in hoisting sail and cutting our cable to leave our sheet anchor and committing ourselves to the hands of God and most earnestly praying for a prosperous wind, it pleased the almighty and most merciful God suddenly to change the winds, which served to bear us from the sands and to recover Queenborough back again.

The 23rd being Monday we came to the mouth and entrance of Queenborough haven. And

as we made to land in small fisher-boats, the Lord Laski, my wife and children in one boat, and E. K., Marie, Elizabeth and John Croker in another, it so fell out that at the ship's side our fisher boat's sailyard and sail was entangled on the main-yard of the fly boat, being struck down, so that, in our setting from the ship's side, the top of our boat being fast above and the winds and stream carrying the boat off below, it inclined so much on the one side that the one half of the fisher boat was well near in the water, and the water came in so, by the entangling specified before, not easily to be undone or loosened, that my lord, my wife and all that saw us thought that of necessity our boat must sink and we must have perished. But God in his providence and mercy had greater care of us so that we became clear, the boat half full of water so that we sat wet to the knees and the water with the billows of the sea came still beating in more and more. And in the middle of this trouble one of our two boatmen had lost his long oar out of the boat into the water and so not only did we lack the help of that oar but also by reason they would have followed the wind and ebb for that oar, contrary to our course in hand, and not able to become by, with much ado we constrained them with the sail, our one oar, and the rudder to make such shift as they could to get to Queenborough town. And in the meanwhile E. K. with a great gauntlet emptied most of the water out of the boat, else it must needs have sunk, by all man's reason. At length, to be brief, we came to the town side, up the crooked creek, where, when as the master of the ship would have taken me out by his arms, standing in the water with his boots, he fell with me in the water, where I was foul arrayed in the water and ooze. God be praised for ever that all that great danger was ended with so small a grief or hurt.

Thursday they went on board ship again and lay in it all night at anchor. On Friday, September 27, 1583 they finally sailed.

SIX : POLAND

1

It was a terrifying voyage according to Dee's account. 'On Saturday we fell on Holland's coast and none of our mariners, master nor pilot, knew the coast; and therefore to the main sea again with great fear and danger by reason we could scarcely get off from that dangerous coast, the wind was so scarce for that purpose. On Sunday 29th we came into the Brill haven and there were like to strike on the ground; at length we came to an anchor and lay on ship all night.'

2

And now they spent four months travelling. Landing at Brill they went by a hoy, a small coastal vessel, to Haarlem and Amsterdam. Dee's servant Edmond Hilton went on by sea from Amsterdam to Gdansk with the heavy baggage. The rest of the party proceeded, by small boats and coach and cart, along the northern edge of Europe. From Dokkum they went to Anjum, Emden, Oldenburg, Bremen, Harburg, Hamburg, and Lübeck.

Apart from the difficulties and dangers of travelling, there had been other worries. At Lübeck, November 9, Dee 'received letters from the Lord Albert Laski, of the Englishmen's ill dealing, and consulting with the townsmen of Hamburg for my stay, and conveying back into England.'

November 15 they received a spirit message.

'Your brother is clapped in prison, how do you like that? Your housekeeper, I mean.'

Dee's brother-in-law Nicholas Fromond was looking after the house at Mortlake.

'And why, I pray you?'

'For that that you may be ashamed of.'

'What is that?'

'They examine him. They say that you have hidden various secret things. As for your books, you may go look them at leisure. It may be that your house may be burned for a remembrance of you too. Well, if they do, so it is. If not, as you wish.'

It was not for another eight months that Dee found out what had happened to his books and his house. The story that his house was burned down probably owes its source to the publication of this unfulfilled spirit warning in Casaubon's 1659 *True and Faithful Narration*.

They left Lübeck December 10 and went on by Wismar and Rostock, to Szczecin, where they arrived on Christmas morning. They stayed there three weeks, Laski eventually joining

them there.

3

Monday January 13, 1584. They put the show stone on Laski's great Bible, and Uriel told them, 'This is the last sleep of the world.' The arrival of Antichrist was foretold.

'Three years are yet to come; even in this month, that begins the fourth year, shall the son of perdition be known to the whole world, suddenly creeping out of his hole like an adder, leading out her young ones after her, to devour the dust of the earth.

'Then shall woe, woe dwell amongst the kings of the earth: for they shall be chosen all anew. Neither shall any that rules now or reigns as a king or governor of the people live to the end of the third year, but they shall all perish. Their kingdoms shall be overthrown. The earth wasted. The rivers become blood, with the blood of men and beasts mixed together. In this time shall the Turkish state be rooted up and cast from the earth. And instead of him shall enter that Devil, the father of liars and such as dwell in the house of vanity.'

As for Laski they were told: 'Behold, this prince shall fly through his kingdoms as the greyhound after his spoil, devouring his possessions, and cutting down the wicked. But he shall become proud.

'The prophets of the lord shall descend from Heaven, clothed with their old garments, very fresh and not stained. Your eyes shall see them. Out of these books shall the true doctrine of the prophets and apostles be gathered, which are not to be understood but with the spirit of understanding, the spirit of wisdom and truth. Behold, I will say to you myself, Come, Hear. For the voice of the lord is with power. Therefore be mild and of humble spirit. For lo, the time shall come. And I have seven books, such as shall be delivered to one of you. And I will meet you walking in the fields and will stretch forth my hand saying, Come. And you shall become a man of understanding. For I will give you bread and you shall eat it, such as shall be the bread of sufficient comfort.'

It thundered in the stone.

'Of you,' said Uriel, pointing to Kelly, 'thus says the lord: you are flesh and become stubborn. Your judgement grows dull and your heart sealed. But I will unseal you and you shall be a partaker. But, because you have offended me, not with power in worldly things. I will make you a great seer, such a one as shall judge the circle of things in nature. But heavenly understanding and spiritual knowledge shall be sealed up from you in this world, for you have become stony and have cried out against my saints.

'Notwithstanding, your life shall be together. You shall be a workman of nature, looking

into the chambers of the earth, the treasures of men. Many things are plucked from you which were yours: but not from you, because I have promised them.

‘This is the last time that any show shall be made in this stone. For lo, the promise of the most highest shall be fulfilled.’

Then Uriel concluded, ‘The end of words, the beginning of deeds.’

‘Seal it up for it is at an end,’ said a voice.

‘What is your will that I should do with this stone?’ asked Dee.

‘All is said, and I am sealed for time to come,’ said Uriel.

The stone was sealed up, the actions were concluded, there would be no more, apocalypse was foretold.

4

February 3, 1584 they arrived at Laško and were lodged in the provost’s house by the church. Laško was some forty kilometres south west of Łódź, one hundred and seventy kilometres south west of Warsaw, two hundred and fifty kilometres north of Kraków . They were now in Laski’s territories and their work could begin. But whatever work it was is never spelled out in the spiritual records. The spiritual sessions continued; indeed, they had never stopped. They had continued throughout the journey. But whether Dee and Kelly were now involved in other activities with Laski – alchemical, magical or political – is not revealed. And as for believing they were settled at last after their long journey, it soon became clear that they had to move on again.

5

The sentence against the stone was revoked and the sessions resumed. Kelly thought he felt a thing about his head as if it clawed with hawks’ claws.

A new figure appeared all covered in a white cloud.

‘I never saw him before,’ said Kelly. ‘He is covered with a red purple robe, such as my lord here uses, but made somewhat like a surplice. His head is covered with feathers like down; his face is like a child’s face; his neck is bare; his legs are bare, almost white; his garment comes only to the small of his leg. He stands upon a great white round table, like crystal, all written with letters infinitely.

He said: ‘I am not able to be seen any longer; I am the servant of the most high: I know the land in Paradise. I am the spirit of wisdom. My name is Nalvage.’

Later he delivered some dramatic visions.

‘He shows a house, and six or seven on top of it with torches. They are like shadows.’

‘In the name of God, what may this mean?’ asked Dee.

‘These shadows go up and down the side of the house, thrusting their torches into the sides of it. The house is like this very house. They go round about the house. There are eight of them. They have claws like eagles. When they sit, they are like apes. They set fire to it and it burns mightily.

‘Now your wife runs out and seems to leap over the gallery rail and to lie as if dead. And now you come out of the door, and the children stand in the way towards the church. And you come by the iron door and kneel and knock your hand upon the earth. They take up your wife. Her head waggles this way and that way. You look up to heaven still and kneel upon one of your knees. The stone house quivers and quakes and all the roof of the house falls into the house down upon the chests. And one of these baggage things laughs. The house burns all off. Your wife is dead, all her face is battered. The right side of her face, her teeth and all is battered. She is bare legged, she has a white petticoat on. Now the apparition is all gone.

‘Marie seems to be pulled out of a pool of water, half alive and half dead, her hair hanging about her ears. They hold her up. Now they carry her out at the gate. You seem to run in the fields and three or four men after you. You run through waters. Everything disappears. And now Nalvage appears again. He seems to have wept.’

‘God gives you warning that you may avoid them,’ said Nalvage.

‘And how shall I avoid them?’ Dee asked.

Nalvage told him, ‘Thus says the lord, behold, I have sealed you for myself, for my people and for my servant. Therefore you shall not perish, no, not the least hair of your body.’ However, he warned, ‘the spirits of wickedness and confusion have risen up against you. This place is not for you. If you move your seat it shall be more acceptable. For even this year you shall see the beginning of many troubles, and the entrance of this Laski into the bloody service of the world.’

‘He seems to spit fire and so vanish away,’ said Kelly.

‘Oh Jesu Christ,’ said Dee, ‘we have committed ourselves into your hand and do submit our wills to your government. What does this terrible destruction threatened to my wife and maid mean? And this frenzy as it were to light on me for sorrow? These things cannot well agree with our former assured protection.’

‘I see a little wench on the bench, all in white,’ said Kelly.

She curtsied to Dee. ‘How do you do, sir?’

‘It is better known to you than to myself how I do,’ said Dee.

‘Sir, I have been in England at your house where they are all well.’

‘Thanked be God.’

‘Amen. The Queen said she was sorry that she had lost her philosopher. But the Lord Treasurer answered, “He will come home shortly begging to you.” They wore black. Sir Henry Sidney died last Wednesday, a privy enemy of yours.’

‘I always took him for one of my chief friends,’ said Dee.

In a marginal note dated six months later, August 24, Dee comments: ‘I understood that Sir Henry Sidney was not dead in February, nor March, no nor in May last. Therefore this must be considered. Dr Hájek’s son told me. You may also mark how the devil at this time did misinform E. K. and so it is possible that this being a lie was his.’

It was not for another two and a half years that Sir Henry died – in August 1586, in the Bishop’s palace at Worcester, and his son Sir Philip in October of that same year at Zutphen in Flanders.

‘But this it is,’ the little wench continued. ‘Truly none can turn the Queen’s heart from you. I could not come into your study, the Queen has caused it to be sealed up.

‘You have been used to good cities; it were good to consider it,’ she continued. ‘Little words are of great matter.’

‘Where, I pray, would you wish me to settle myself first?’

‘My mother would give you counsel to dwell at Laško.’

‘Do you differ from your mother?’

‘Yes.’

‘Upon what?’

‘Jesu,’ she said, ‘you think I am an unwise maiden. The devil brings the sound out of my mouth to your ears, Edward Kelly. For I said Kraków, and he spoke Laško.’

Note the envy and power of the devil, Dee wrote in the margin.

‘Seeing your mother would wish me to dwell at Kraków, at what other place would you wish me to dwell?’ Dee asked.

‘Now I feel a hussing thing go from my head,’ said Kelly.

‘I pray you do not be offended by my simplicity. My mother and I are all one. In us is no discord. I pray you to bear with me if I say, I am the concord of time. These are my words. My mother would have you dwell at Kraków. And I consent to it. Let them who are wise understand. Always pray that you may hear truly and receive faithfully.’

‘May I before I go any further ask if you are Madini?’ said Dee.

‘I am so, sir.’

Madini told them that there had been an attempt to murder Laski.

‘You met a man by the way,’ she said. ‘He is an Irishman but he said he was a Frenchman. I heard the king when he told him to go into England. But he could not poison him there. Therefore he followed him all the way. But if he returns again they say we will exalt him. Why has the king absented himself, but to betray his kingdom? Truly, I can tell no other cause.’

Conspiracy of the king of Poland with the Turk against Laski, Dee noted in the margin.

‘My mother says within these few days let him go to Kraków, as David did before Saul. It may be the people will like him well. Although he hates him he cannot hurt him.’ Then she warned Dee, ‘Sir, if you stay here, you will have great grief in this house.’

‘How long, I pray you, would you wish me to stay here, or how soon to be gone away?’

‘Listen,’ said Madini. ‘He, Kelly, marvels at what I will say now.’

‘So I did indeed,’ said Kelly.

‘The physician says, infected air is to be avoided in haste. Many princes and learned men shall be acquainted with you. The good are often stirred up to offend God, whose offences are both wilful and rash; for temptation is a touchstone and is one of the black fellow’s chief weapons.’

‘I beg you,’ said Dee, ‘to say something of the time of our leaving here,’

‘Go from here as soon as you can,’ said Madini.

‘To Kraków you mean?’

‘Yes. I will now and then visit you there, and will become friends with you, Kelly, now, for you have become a good man.’

‘Concerning that terrible vision,’ Dee asked, ‘what can you say of it?’

‘As a warning to beware that that should be.’

‘But if I go to Kraków, no such thing shall happen, I trust?’

‘So, sir,’ said Madini. ‘Therefore this is your warning.’

‘Is it not then the will of God that I shall set up the table here, as you see we have prepared?’ asked Dee.

‘Be content,’ said Madini. ‘This wilderness is not forty years. My mother says it must not be here; yet at your request it may be.’

‘How can that be?’ asked Kelly.

‘At man’s commandment the sun can stand,’ said Dee.

‘He says the truth, believe him,’ said Madini. ‘Therefore I will not urge anything here but

defer till we come to Kraków .’

‘Shall I set it up at Kraków?’ Dee asked. ‘And shall I require Pernus’ house there? Or what other house is in God’s determination for me and mine?’

‘As wise as I am, I cannot tell what to say yet. It is the town where the Sabbath day shall be celebrated.’

‘But now, as concerning the house, what is your word?’

‘You will not be destitute of a house. Will you believe me, for I am your true friend Madini. Here shall be the end of your turmoil. Be of good cheer.’

‘Did you not wish us to have my chest from Torn before we go?’ Dee asked.

‘Yes, when the black man has called home his waters.’

‘As soon as we can get it here from Torn, then we are to be going?’

‘How will my lord agree to this?’ asked Kelly.

‘Now you have become a new man, both may dwell in one house.’

‘Perhaps my lord’s provision of money will not be such as to serve for our carriage anew. Besides that, I would wish Kežmarok were redeemed before he should come to Kraków . Perhaps then his credit with the people would be greater.’

It seems that Laski, short of funds, had mortgaged his property at Kežmarok.

‘Those that become kings care nothing for farmhouses,’ said Madini.

‘I wish that the needless cost bestowed here had been saved,’ said Dee, ‘or that you had told us this sooner.’

‘Silence now, is my best answer.’

‘Do you know, oh lord, what I say? Have we had any name of Nalvage expressed in our books of tables before?’

‘What you have written, that you have written. He is a new kinsman to my mother. We call him with us Fuga terrestrium.’ The flight of the terrestrials, the flight of the earthly ones.

‘We beseech God that all intermeddling and sauciness of the wicked in these actions may cease,’ implored Dee. ‘You know how one clawed him here on the head as if with eagles’ claws.’

‘He may rejoice that they did not claw his soul,’ said Madini. ‘You are content to let me go.’

‘She goes away somewhat bigger, and in a long gown,’ Kelly reported.

Good counsel for recovering and confirming my health. (Dee had an ague).

If the pedestal for the holy table being made here shall be carried with us to Kraków , rather than make a new one there: both to save time and to have our doings the more secret?

What is your knowledge and judgement of A. L.'s wife, in respect of her life past, present and to come? For we doubt she is not our sound friend.

It is our very earnest desire that the Danish treasure in England in the ten places seized on by E. K. might be brought here, very speedily; whereby Laski might redeem Kežmarok and Laško lands, mortgaged, and also pay his debts in Kraków and about Kraków . For else neither can he come with any credit to Kraków , as he is willed, nor can he come to us there so commodiously and oft as our conference may be requisite. And thirdly, the day of forfeiting Kežmarok, without the Emperor's favourable help, draws near: as in April at St George's day next.

And by your speech of England you give me occasion to enquire whether her Majesty causes my rents to be received by my assigned deputy, or not?

Whether her Majesty, or the council, intend to send for me again into England or not?

And as concerning the red powder which E. K. found with the book in England, what is it and what is the best use of it and how is that use to be practised or performed?

After they had written these questions they prayed and asked for Madini to be sent.

'Do not be too pierced with the sight of me,' she said to Kelly, for he looked marvellously earnestly on her.

She seemed more bright than she was and to stand in a brighter place, Kelly said. 'Now she is gone to the place on the cushions on the bench where she stood yesterday. Now she is playing with her coats as young children do.'

At length she sat down on the cushions.

'It is thought good you should rest at Kraków , for it is a place sanctified both in fore-determination and now. Therefore use the Sabbath and rest from labour; reap now and eat the fruit of your labour. You are not bound but for the service of God; nor shall you be enriched by princes, but shall enrich them. This year to come is of great bloodshed.'

As for Laski, she replied: 'Neither is the power of God in him for his own sake, but for the spirit that God has planted in him. For we have known him and again have forgotten him. And yet we understand him. But – I teach you a mystery – by irradiation into him and not by reflexion from himself. As the heavens fly from the stink of the infected powers, even so, fly.'

Then she called 'Ganislav, Ganislav,' and he came, his face seemed half like a man and half like a woman, his body all covered with hair, rugged.

‘What do you want with me? What do you want?’ Ganislay asked.

Madini shook and brushed her coats.

‘Thus says my maker: beware of wild honey and raw fruit. The one clarified, the other ripened may become good. Those that do not know wine become drunk, but to such as know it, it brings health. Even so, this doctrine. For to him that tastes it, being ripe, it becomes comfort. But to him that tastes it wildly, it works sorrow.’

And then she answered the last three questions. ‘Even as your desire is, so are all things in England. Nothing kept back. But for your sake such as are yours are with them friendly used. If you should not be called home, how should you enjoy the benefits of God’s promise which has said, you shall call her back, etc., to her preservation? But first, these things must come to pass. The country shall be divided, one rise up against another. Great treasures be wrought. Yea, and one cut another’s throat; and when the greatest troubles are, then shall you save her life. Then shall the wall be broken down and free passage shall be made; and such as are scorers and ascend up the narrow steps or show themselves on the walls shall be trodden down and defaced.

‘Here is understanding,’ she said to Kelly. ‘That which you have is a part of four and is become the fifth.’

Was she saying that the powder was the fifth essence, the quintessence, the alchemical substance combining and transcending the four elements?

‘Yet it is none of the four, dignified in a cube, whose root is 252. I will know it shortly. You have no power for the time is not yet come, but must be brought forth slowly that it may be known and revealed to you, neither for your own sake nor at your request but by the will of God for a time to come.’

‘I pray you to tell me plainly what it is,’ said Kelly.

‘Be content,’ said Madini. ‘I speak thus lest you should sin. God the father, the son and the holy ghost bless you.’

And then she went away, like a mighty tall woman, said Kelly.

8

Nalvage appeared to them.

‘To him to whom it is said, Go, thus I say, let him be going. For God has stretched out his hand and he says, I will not pluck it back but with vengeance.’

‘Oh God, to whom is that Go said?’ asked Dee.

He was sick with a fever, and he was also waiting for Laski’s help, chiefly for the

provision of coach, house and money.

‘You mortal men, who is the lord of health?’ asked Nalvage.

‘The God of heaven and earth,’ said Dee.

‘The lord is angry and he said to you, be gone. Lo, there is a day past. And if his own angel had not made intercession for him, he had been nothing. Seal these things, make haste. Be going. For the lord is angry.’

‘Oh God,’ said Dee.

‘Thus he says, Laski has rejoiced with a harlot and has measured me which am unknown; but he shall be rewarded. To you it is said, make haste and be gone. I will fulfil my promise in him for your sake; but he shall fall, being none of your acquaintance.’

9

Monday, March 9, 1584, Dee and his wife and family left Laško for Kraków, arriving there on Friday, 13 March at around three in the afternoon. For the first week they lodged in the suburbs by the church. Then they moved to a house in St Stephen’s street which Dee leased for a year for eighty guilders. Kelly arrived on the Friday of Easter week, 27 March old style, 6 April new style, ‘Easter day being the first day of April in Poland by the new Gregorian institution,’ Dee noted, his abortive English calendar reforms constantly brought to mind.

10

They resumed their consultations. Nalvage came to dictate tables of the heavenly language.

‘He has a gown of white silk with a cape with three pendants with tassels on the ends of them all green. It is fur, white, and seems to shine with a wavering glistering. On his head is nothing. He has no beard. His physiognomy is like the picture of King Edward VI. His hair hangs down a quarter of the length of the cape, somewhat curling, yellow. He has a rod or wand in his hand, almost as big as my little finger; it is of gold and divided into three equal parts, with a brighter gold than the rest. He stands upon his round table of crystal, or rather mother of pearl; there appear an infinite number of letters on the same, as thick as one can stand by another. The table is somewhat inclined on one side; he stands in the very middle, his garment covers his feet, his breast seems smooth as the down remaining on a swan when all the feathers are off, so is his neck, etc. He is lean and long visaged.’

Nalvage announced, ‘I am to instruct and inform you, according to your doctrine delivered, which is contained in 49 tables. In 49 voices or callings: which are the natural keys

to open those, not 49 but 48 (for one is not to be opened) gates of understanding, whereby you shall have knowledge to move every gate and to call out as many as you please or shall be thought necessary, which can very well, righteously and wisely, open to you the secrets of their cities and make you understand perfectly the contained in the tables. Through which knowledge you shall easily be able to judge not as the world does but perfectly of the world and of all beings contained within the compass of nature and of all things which are subject to an end.

‘But behold this charge of mine is tied to time; therefore be diligent to learn; for it is neither a free school nor a school of continuance. For as power is not given to me beyond the first day of August next, so you have no strength to learn after, because I am the staff of your doctrine.’

The same afternoon, Thursday, April 12, after some short ejaculations of prayers to God, there appeared a great black mastiff dog with whom Dee would have nothing to do, but waited for Nalvage. He said he was Nalvage. They rebuked him as a hell-hound. At length he departed and Nalvage appeared, but brighter than before.

‘Have you those things I told you today?’ he asked.

‘We have them in record and mind,’ said Dee.

‘Read them.’

Dee read them.

And then he laughed, ha ha ha, a great laughter. He also had a table but it did not seem to be like the previous table of Nalvage. There were ten or eleven divisions in this table that were not in the former one.

‘If you are Nalvage,’ said Dee, ‘proceed in the doctrine of wisdom. If you are not Nalvage, depart in the name of Jesus.’

‘I have free will and therefore I will be here.’

‘Now I have no doubt you are a deceiver,’ said Dee.

And a voice on one side said, ‘The ignorance of the wicked becomes dust, which showing itself is swept out of doors and thrown on the dunghills.’

And one like the true Nalvage appeared, saying, ‘As dust I sweep you out and cast you into that dunghill which is the place of the greatest woe.’

He struck him with an iron like a pair of tongues in the form of a mould to cast pellets in, gripping his brain and underchaps, and so he fell down and disappeared and in his place came Nalvage.

‘My us is as good as your um,’ said Nalvage.

Kelly explained that in his heart he thought that it might be that now one devil mastered another, and thereupon said 'um.'

'To this doctrine belongs the perfect knowledge and remembrance of the mystical creatures,' said Nalvage. 'How therefore shall I inform you who do not know them?'

'Do you mean as Baligon, Bobogel, etc?'

 Dee asked.

'The characters of letters of the table,' said Nalvage.

'You mean the mystical letters in which the holy book is promised to be written, and if the book is so written and laid open before us, then you will point from letter to letter and we are to record your instructions,' said Dee. 'Then I trust we shall sufficiently understand and learn your instructions.'

'Also in receiving the calls,' said Nalvage, 'this is to be noted, that they are to be uttered by me backwards; and of you in practice, forwards.'

'I understand it,' said Dee, 'for the efficacy of them; else all things would appear, and so hinder our proceeding in learning.'

If they spoke the words forwards, they would summon up the angels when all they wanted to do at the moment was to write down the appropriate summoning calls.

Nalvage dictated the numbers through Kelly. Dee would consult the tables and write down the letter equivalent. Not only were the individual words of the call spelled out in reverse, letter by letter, but the whole message was given in reverse, starting with the last word.

'10 H. 49 ascending: T. 49 descending: A. 909 directly: O simply. 2029 directly: H.

'Be patient, for I told you it would be tedious,' said Nalvage.

11

Friday, April 13 around three o'clock, Nalvage appeared and spoke much to Kelly which Kelly did not communicate to Dee. But at length he confessed that Nalvage gave him brotherly counsel to cease dealing as an idolater or fornicator against God by asking counsel of such as he did. Kelly confessed that he had been that day, and some days before, dealing by himself after his manner, to understand of my lord Laski, and of other matters of Laško, and left his questions written in his window. Nalvage told him the devil had now taken away his questions. Kelly went down to see if it were true, and he found it true.

'Pray,' said Nalvage.

They prayed.

'There is an error in the last, not in the number but in the letter,' said Nalvage. 'I will first go through the letters and after come to the numbers. How many words have you received

today?’

‘Thirteen,’ said Dee, ‘of which jaida was said to be the last of the call.’

‘They are worth more than the kingdom of Poland. Be patient for these things are wonderful.’

And then more letters and numbers were dictated.

‘Add those last numbers,’ Nalvage ordered.

‘They make 4723,’ said Dee.

‘It is called the mystical root in the highest ascendant of transmutation.’

‘These phrases are dark,’ said Dee. ‘When shall it please God that they may be made plain?’

‘It is the square of the philosopher’s work,’ said Nalvage.

‘You said it was a root,’ said Dee.

‘So it is, a root square.’

‘The square of that is 22,306,729.’

‘The word is, by interpretation, the true mother of fire. The vain philosophers think it begets bodies; but in truth it conceives and brings forth.’

The dictation continued. ‘D the fifth, ascending 4. O the 39, ascending, 7806 ...’

12

Nalvage acknowledged the difficulties of dictation.

‘As the ear is the chief sense so, being infected, it is the greatest hindrance. Many there are that thrust themselves between you and me, and they are increased. Power is given again to the show stone and you shall not be hindered.’

‘Shall I bring it out now?’ asked Dee.

‘As you wish.’

He brought out the stone and it seemed marvellously brighter than it used to appear before. Michael appeared in it, as he used to appear, with his sword in his hand and in a long white gown.

‘The powers of the earth have risen up against you,’ he told them, ‘but you shall prevail and this doctrine shall be delivered as is promised and according to time.’

Then Gabriel, who came to Daniel, appeared all in complete harness like the scales of a fish from his armpits downward, and with a spear in his hand, all of fire, about two yards long.

Dee asked him about Laski.

‘When we enter into him we know him, but away from him he is scarce known to us, as of him of whom it is said he has consented with a harlot. We do not know the end of God’s justice which is upon him. But we will pray to God to be merciful to him for your sake, because you shall not be made a laughing stock to the wicked. Pray for him that you may work in him that which he does not work for himself.’

13

Nalvage delivered the words of the angelic summons, Kelly spoke them, Dee wrote them down. Finally they came to the end. ‘DAI OHOG GSROV FNOS LO.’

‘This is the end of the mighty and first call,’ said Nalvage. ‘Pray that you may understand what it is.’

‘Do you mean now?’ asked Dee.

‘Yes, now.’

‘I pray to that intent,’ said Dee.

All the stone showed fire, everything was on fire, nothing else appearing, not like common fire but clear, thin. Then it became clear and now Nalvage was on top of the globe and his seat remained in the fire. Now he held up his right hand and the same seemed to be many hands. On one of his fingers was an T. It vanished away, and then on his fingers words appeared as follows. They were the translation of the words in the angelic language that they had just received.

‘I reign over you, says the God of justice, in power exalted above the firmaments of wrath, in whose hands the son is as a sword and the moon as a through-thrusting fire which measures your garments in the midst of my ventures and trussed you together as the palms of my hands, whose seats I garnished with the fire of gathering and beautified your garments with admiration, to whom I made a law to govern the holy cities and delivered you a rod with the ark of knowledge, moreover you lifted up your voices and swore obedience and faith to him that lives and triumphs, whose beginning is not nor end cannot be which shines as a flame in the midst of your palace and reigns amongst you as the balance of righteousness and truth. Move therefore and show yourselves, open the mysteries of your creation, be friendly unto me; for I am the servant of the same your God, the true worshipper of the highest.’

Nalvage explained. ‘It is the sense in your tongue of the holy and mystical call delivered before, which follows in practice for moving the second table, the kings and ministers of government; the utterance of which is of force, and moves them to visible apparition; moved and appeared they are forced by the covenant of God delivered by his spirit to render obedience

and faithful society. Wherein they will open the mysteries of their creation as far as shall be necessary and give you understanding of many thousand secrets in which you are yet but children. For every table has his king, every key opens his gate, and every gate being opened gives knowledge of himself of entrance and of the mysteries of those things of which he is an enclosure.'

14

Later that afternoon Dee and Kelly discussed the manner of scrying images.

'They have very eyes which twinkle as other men's eyes do, and therefore I see them with my external eye, not with my imagination,' said Kelly.

But there was no clear way of telling the good from the bad. After one session a spirit appeared deriding their instructor, saying, 'You may know his virtue by his wisdom, he never went to school. He is a slow schoolmaster and of small understanding.'

One time they were given a message of amazing ecclesiastical conformity.

'Be holy and righteous in the works of your hands and always keep the Sabbath of your redeemer hereafter, for even yet the serpent is amongst us,' they were told.

Perhaps this was a political rather than a spiritual instruction, a warning to conform to the Roman Catholic norms of Kraków, to be seen to attend church, so they would not attract attention as Protestant heretics.

'Let your houses be swept clean that then when the spy enters he finds nothing to feed on,' they were warned.

And then another time they took out the stone and the curtain remained drawn and nothing appeared.

Kelly immediately fell into a new doubting of the truth of these actions and said he had a vision by a good creature the night before, who said that these creatures with which he dealt would appear to him no more.

Both the previous day's scorner and their instructors were all devils, Kelly said, and he would sit no more to receive ABC, or any doctrine of theirs by letters unless they would otherwise expressly and lively deliver a plain rule of it; with many other arguments to disprove the truth of their actions.

'John your boy can well enough deliver you their letters, and so you do not need me,' he said, and rose and went away, leaving Dee alone in his study appointed for these actions.

Thursday, April 1, Dee records: As I was in my upper study and had gathered the holy words of the second and third call and had conferred them with their English also delivered to us, Kelly came up the stairs and went into his study and came out again and as he was going down the stairs I opened my study door and greeted him. He then came up again and came into my study. And there I showed him what I had done, and how I had some understanding of these holy words, their significations by reason of due applying the English to the word Christus, intending thereby to have induced him better to like the manner of our friends' due and methodical proceeding with us, and told him that unless I should have the words of this strange language delivered to us letter by letter, we might err both in orthography, and also for want of the true pronunciation of the words and distinction of the points, we might more miss the effect intended.

But as on last Tuesday so now again he said our teachers were deluders and not good or sufficient teachers, who had not in two years' space made us able to understand or do anything. And that in two years he could have learned all the seven liberal sciences if he had first learned logic. (He had recently been studying logic diligently). And so he would have no more to do with them in any way at all, he wished he was in England, and he said that if these books were his he would burn them out of hand, and that he had written to my lord, by Pernus, that he took our teachers to be deceivers, and wicked, and no good creatures of God. With many such speeches and forceful reasons (as he thought) to dissuade himself from any more dealing with them. But willed me to use John my boy as my scryer, for these spiritual creatures were not bound to him, etc.

Dee did not attempt to use his servant, John, for scrying. Instead, Saturday, April 21, Kelly was persuaded to resume the sittings. Kelly propounded six questions which had bred great doubt in his mind, and requested their answers.

'He would have our spiritual friends promise him the performance of the points,' said Dee.

'If we were masters of our own doings we might well promise,' said Gabriel. 'But we are servants and do the will of our master. But let me ask you one question, do you not think that all things are possible with God?'

'I do so and I know so,' said Kelly.

'Then there is no cause why you should distrust. Let him who is a servant and is

commanded to go, go. And let not the earth rise up and strive against the plowman.'

'Both voices seem to come to my ear at once,' said Kelly.

'These things, that is to say this doctrine, delivered by us,' said Gabriel and Nalvage, 'is of God and of his mercies granted to you, which cannot be in vain, and therefore to be performed. He never heard of any man that would ask if God would perform his promises.'

'By August next?' asked Kelly.

'What if it were a hundred Augusts? You may be weary before next August as the children of Israel were of their manna.'

'Why do you join numbers with these letters and add none with those of the former table?'

'Brother, what is the cause that all the world is made by numbers? The numbers we speak of are of reason and form, and not of merchants.'

Dee asked, 'I beseech you as concerning the powder which he thinks that he has made due assay of, as if it should have been the philosopher's stone, and so affirmed to be by the minister of this action. I beseech you to answer the thing that his reason may be satisfied.'

They gave no answer, but proceeded with the former matter of numbers.

Kelly asked whether this language was known in any part of the world or not. If it was, where and to whom?

'Man in his creation, being made an innocent, was also authorized and made partaker of the power and spirit of God; whereby he not only knew all things under his creation and spoke of them properly, naming them as they were, but was also partaker of our presence and society, yea a speaker of the mysteries of God, yea with God himself, and so became holy in the sight of God until Coronzon (for so is the true name of that mighty devil) envying his felicity and perceiving that the substance of his lesser part was frail and imperfect began to assail him, and so prevailed. Offending, he became accursed in the sight of God and so lost the garden of felicity, the judgement of his understanding, but not utterly God's favour. And was driven forth as your Scriptures record to the earth which was covered with brambles: where being as dumb and not able to speak he began of necessity to learn that language which you, Kelly, call Hebrew and yet not that Hebrew amongst you; in which he uttered and delivered to his posterity the nearest knowledge he had of God's creatures. And from himself divided his speech into three parts, twelve, three and seven, the number of which remains, but the true forms and pronunciations went; and therefore it is not of that force that it was in his own dignity, much less to be compared with this which we deliver, which Adam truly spoke in innocence and was never uttered nor disclosed to man since then until now, in which the power of God must work and wisdom in her true nature be delivered: which are not to be spoken of in

any other thing nor to be talked of with man's imagination. For it is written, wisdom sits upon a hill and beholds the four winds, and girds herself together as the brightness of the morning, which is visited with a few and dwells alone as though she were a widow.

‘Thus you see there the necessity of this tongue, the excellency of it, and the cause why it is preferred before that which you call Hebrew. For it is written, every less consents to his greater. I trust this is sufficient.’

‘As concerning the powder,’ asked Kelly, ‘what is it?’

‘What it is, that it is, for the knowledge of it may lead you to error.’

This answer greatly offended Kelly and thereupon he left off and would receive no more at their hands.

‘God make him patient,’ implored Dee.

17

Wednesday, April 25, at seven in the morning they were back at the actions as before.

‘Show a token, oh lord, when your will is, whereby to persuade your merciful dealings with us and the presence of your faithful ministers.’

The frame of the stone gave what Dee describes as a crickling, no hand touching it or otherwise any mortal or worldly thing moving it.

‘I heard it very certainly,’ Dee records.

And to Kelly it seemed the sound of a bunch of keys, as if they had been shaken quickly and strongly.

They were in the middle of receiving further instruction when Nalvage threw down his rod upon the table.

‘Did I not say you should not move?’ he said.

Dee had moved to the door because he heard someone going up and down the room outside, and they had forgotten to shut the door at the foot of the stairs.

‘Oh lord, I did it not upon any wilful disobedience,’ said Dee. ‘But pardon this fault and by your grace, oh God, I will avoid the like fault henceforward.’

‘It was a great fault,’ said Nalvage.

At the end of the session Gabriel told them, ‘Albert Laski has not done the commandment of God; he should have been here by this time.’

Laski arrived later that night and lay in a little wooden building, among guards, by St Stanislaus’ church. On the following Friday morning he intended to begin his journey to Kežmarok to try to recover it. ‘Jesus prosper his just cause,’ wrote Dee.

They were given an enigmatic parable.

‘Davida, a mighty prophet, not the least upon the earth, opened his mouth and said, “Behold, a whale shall come from the east, the fourteenth day of the month. And he entered into the field and he met with a merchant and he said to him, “You are not for me, for your intent dwells in the world.” He went further and, lo, there was a field of all kinds of people, variously recreating themselves in their own pleasures, and still he said, “Lo, these are not for me,” and he went on and lo he saw, and it was a naked man.’

Gabriel and Nalvage seemed to be speaking together.

‘Mark,’ they said to Kelly.

‘So I do,’ he said.

‘In his hands were various things: moss, leaves, flowers and herbs. And he wondered, saying, “Why are you naked?”

‘And he said, “Lo, I am old and am without garments, and these are the things with which I will be clothed.”

‘And the prophet talked with him and told him of the whale. And he commanded him to kneel and he lifted up his hands to heaven and prayed with himself.

‘And he said to him also, “I am a prophet, rise up, I will bless you in the name of my prophecy.”

‘And lo, he took him by the hand and went forward, and the way was rough, stony and very hard: and as they went they found men, huge and big, monstrous.

‘And the prophet said, “These do not please me.”

‘And as they talked on the way they overtook a little child and the prophet asked him his name and he answered, he was a man.

‘And he said, “You please me, for you may be a man.”

‘There was a hill and they ascended and after a while the child became weary and sat down saying with himself, “This hill is troublesome, I am not able to keep company with them.”

‘And the prophet, missing him, went back and found him sitting.

‘And he began to weep saying, “Where will you lead me?”

‘But the prophet comforted him and said, “Now you see you are not a man.”

And thus he did a number of times as they ascended. And lo, it was the top of the hill and the sun was hot and clear in the midst of the day.

‘The prophet said to the child, “Look to the centre of the sun,” and so he did, steadfastly.

‘And the prophet said to him, “Now I have experience of you and I know you will be a man.”

‘And he said to him that was naked, “Here are pen, ink and paper. And lo, you have one that can see far off.”

‘And he showed him the seas, saying, “Look to the east.”

‘And he told him of the whale and of his coming and of many mysteries.

‘But the man answered him saying, “I am naked, the air is sharp and I have no food. How can I therefore stay so many days?”

‘And he said to him, “Sit down and note until this child becomes a man. Feed by comfort. For the whale shall be yours, in whose belly is swallowed a chest of great value,” and they were contented.

‘Behold, the people of there were rich and had conquered many nations so that he was a monarch in the world. This monarch was skilful in all sciences and knew all things to come, and he called his council together and said to them, “Lo, the cause why I have made those mighty banks and have drawn my people from the lower places and the seas is that I fear a whale which, if he lands in my kingdoms, will be my destruction.”

‘And they told him what the prophet had said and he began to rage and was puffed up with anger and he opened his books a second time and his eyes were opened and he understood that the prophet had ascended to the top of the mountain and had taken with him a naked man and a child.

‘And he said to his ministers, “Ascend, and bring me the child, for I will examine him and know the prophet’s meaning.”

‘And he apparelled him richly and gave him much, but he did not prevail.

‘And he said within himself, “Ascend they shall again and bring down that man.”

‘And the servants ascended and they found a marble stone and they were angry among themselves saying, “Is this a man?”

‘And lo, they came to the king and said, “You send us forth but we found a mighty stone not able to be moved. Where is it therefore that you will have us seek that man?”

‘But he said within himself, “I will overcome the child,” and he took him by the hand and led him into his orchard where he opened to him the secrets of his books, so that he became skilful.

‘But lo, the prophet arose and as he walked towards the hill to comfort them who he accounted his friends, he espied the child apparelled strangely and in company with strangers.

‘And he opened his mouth and began to prophesy, saying: “The king has risen up against

himself for he has chosen the chosen and has opened the secrets of his own kingdom to his destruction,” and he stretched forth his hand and said to the child, “Come with me.”

‘And he was unwilling for his pleasures were great. And he lifted up his voice and spoke and he swore and lo, he came with him even to the mountain.

‘And the prophet said to him, “When you were a child I led you, but now you have become a man, stretch forth your legs and labour,” and he was unwilling.

‘Thus, while they were talking, those who waited upon him were at his feet, armed, saying, “Come with us, for we are strong enough to deliver you.”

‘But the prophet said, “Go back and tell your king that I found him on the way, and a stranger, and I had pity on him and I took him for my own. Therefore do not strive, for justice must prevail.”

‘And they began to stagger as drunkards for they knew it was true.

‘And the prophet said, “Now come with me, I will lead you.”

‘And they ascended.

‘The prophet held up his hands and said, “I see,” and behold, he that was naked arose and said, “I see also.”

‘And the seas arose and a great tempest and broke down the banks and entered on the earth doing much harm to the people of that kingdom. And lo, there arose a second wind: and there were four beasts such as are in the world and were never known. And they came swimming and so landed on the hill.

‘And the prophet said, “Arise, draw out your swords and kill them,” and so they did.

‘Behold, the blood of them vanished into air and the flesh became earth; the entrails wasted away with the waters and their bones burned with a mighty fire. The second wind arose and there were five crowns; in the midst of them sat the father of life with a golden head, whose feet bathed themselves in dew and sweet manna.

‘And the prophet said, “Put forth your hands,” and they did so but lo, they were afraid, for he that stood in the midst of the crowns was full of beauty.

‘And the prophet said, “Fear not, come with me.”

‘And he opened to them the secrets of the crown, for in every one of them was a golden sentence. And the secrets of the hill began to shake and there was a great earthquake.

‘The third wind arose and the twelve cedar trees that were never corrupted came and planted themselves in twelve places of the hill and they brought forth strange fruits, not as cedar trees do.

‘The prophet said, “Gather, for I know you hunger, that you may be refreshed.”

‘While they thus talked the fourth wind arose and behold all the mountain was a flaming fire and there were five earthquakes such as were not seen since the beginning of the world.

‘The prophet took them up for they were become as dead. And suddenly the firmament and the waters were joined together and the whale came, like a legion of storms, or as the bottomless cave of the north when it is opened. And she was full of eyes on every side.

‘The prophet said, “Stand still,” but they trembled.

‘The waters sank and fell away suddenly so that the whale lay upon the hill, roaring like a cave of lions, and the prophet took them by the hands and led them to the whale’s mouth saying, “Go in,” but they trembled vehemently.

‘He said to them a second time, “Go in,” and they dared not.

‘And he swore to them and they entered in and he lifted up his voice and cried mightily, “Come away,” and lo, they stood before him richer than an emperor’s throne for unto him that was naked were clothes given; unto him that was a child and a man, were twelve gates opened.

‘And the prophet cried mightily and said, “This whale cannot die,” and lifted up his voice again and said, “Within this whale are many chambers and secret dwelling places, which I will divide between you on the right side (at which was a child and now a man). There are twelve opened, but unto you who have provided strange garments for yourself and not such as men use to wear, I will give you head, heart and left side whose places are forty-six. You shall enter and be possessed this day together; and behold, the son shall return again twenty-one times and in one year, but not all at one time. You shall depart hence into a dwelling that shall be all one; where there is no end, the place of comfort and unspeakable glory.

““I have said.””

19

It was a splendid story. Dee asked for elucidation.

‘As you have delivered us a parable, enigma or prophecy, so I beseech you for the setting forth of God’s honour and glory to expound what is meant by the whale, the naked man, the child, etc.’

‘The prophet is in his name. The naked man is Dee. The child is Kelly. The prince is the devil. The hill is the world. The waters are the bosom of God. The four beasts are the four elements. The twelve trees are the twelve parts of the heavens. The whale is the spirit of God. The chambers are the degrees of wisdom. The thunders and winds are the ends of God’s will and judgements. The rest are not to be spoken of.’

They were given another parable.

‘A mighty city was built on the top of a mountain in which dwelt many thousands. Round about the hill ran a fresh river which was the only comfort of the town; for of it they drank, their wives, their children, their manservants, their maidservants, their camels, horses, mules and all the beasts of the fields. The beginning of this river was a spring which was unknown to the city by reason of the height from where it descended.

It came to pass that a serpent groaned for her time and lo, she brought forth and her brood were such as herself. And she lifted up her head and leaned upon her twice writhen tail, and beheld the sun steadfastly, for her envy was toward that city and she said within herself: my children are yet young, the time grew and they became big: and she went to the spring and smiled and said with a laughing voice, “The earth is fallen into you, you are choked. But listen to my voice, you shall receive comfort.”

But she would not. And she lifted up her voice and roared, for she was full of craft and deceit. And she said to the shingles, through which the spring runs, “You are full of emptiness and void places. Let my children therefore hide themselves within you for a season,” and they were contented; and she departed willingly and said within herself, “Now I know I shall be lady of the city.”

‘And after a few years the young serpents became great so that the one half of their bodies dwelt within the shingles, the rest troubled the passage of the spring, so that the spring groaned, for the injury that was done against her was great. A great misery, for the hill is become desolate without the water, and the city and the beasts perish for want of drink, for the people groan and are full of sorrow. The city and serpents are sixty now, and judgement must be had between the shingles and the spring, for between lies the life and death of the city.

‘Thus says the lord to you,’ said Gabriel, pointing at Kelly, “‘Gird up yourself and sit down, consider both parts and give judgement; for your mouth shall this day be the judgement of the lord.’”

‘Do you mean me?’ asked Kelly. ‘As the lord has put the authority of judgement into my hands, so I beseech him to give me wisdom and understanding to judge right. And because the judgement of this is committed to me, I suspect some other mystery to lie hidden in my judgement required of this. But if it shall please God that my friend here, Mr Dee, shall give me his advice, I shall think myself well satisfied.’

‘Consider with yourself, says the lord, and give judgement against the shingles for the fault is plain. Consider two points, the necessity of the spring, that it must come that way, and

secondly, the health of the city.’

‘My judgement is that the shingles and serpent should be removed away by an earthquake from the place which they encumber and hinder, that there may be a fit new place and course for the spring to the relief of that city as it was before,’ said Kelly.

‘Be it so as you have said, for it is a just judgement. Now hear what the lord says. The people and city of the hill is the world, which is from time to time by the mercy and spring of God’s wisdom relieved and quenched according to the extremity and necessity of their thirsting. But the people and city are such as are of the temple and church of God, who drink of his mercy to their comfort. The camels and other beasts are the people of the earth who delight in sin and in their own imagination, who also are relieved with those that are of the city. But the diversities of their bodies causes the diversity of the ends of their comfort. The hill where the spring is, signifies his prophets and such as are drunk in the lord, through whom inwardly the mercies and will of God and of the highest are open from time to time, according to the secret will and determination of such as are within the city of his elect. But the frailties and affections of their flesh and outward man are their fond imaginations and loose shingles wherein the serpent, the old devil, has harboured her children, the spirits of darkness and deceit, which always resist the will of God, and are put between the mercies of God and his people.

‘Moses, Daniel, Esdras, all the rest of the prophets, Christ’s twelve, Paul the messenger of God, they all hurt the congregations of the faithful in their flesh until they gave sentence against themselves, as you have done, with amendment of life. For who is worthy to know the secrets of our God but he that delights in righteousness, is obedient, full of faith, and the spirit of understanding?

‘Be it therefore unto you as you have said. Let the shingles and serpents be separated, that the fountain may feed as before.’

21

Yet again Kelly had been privately practising magic.

‘All that trash that you have of the wicked, burn it,’ he was told.

‘I do not know they are wicked,’ he said.

‘Their doings with you are the hindrance of the will of God and therefore they are wicked. You have given judgement against yourself. Take heed you do not offend your own soul.’

‘Send down your spirit, oh lord, and illuminate Edward Kelly’s heart with perceiving of his wrong opinion,’ implored Dee.

‘If Moses and Daniel were skilful in the arts of the Egyptian magicians and were not

thereby hindered for being the servants of God, why may not I deal with these without hindrance to the will of God?' Kelly asked.

'Darkness yielded to light; the greater excluded the lesser. The more a man knows wickedness, the more he shall hate it, being called back. The more they know the shadow, so much more they delighted in the body. For the doings of the Egyptians seem, and are not so. The doings of the lord are, and continue; for as the painter imitates gestures of man in his faculty, so does the devil the substance and things created and made by God. Stand up and look into the whole world, into her youth and middle age, for they are past. Where are the monuments that Satan has built?'

'Has Satan built any monuments?' asked Kelly.

'Yes. Has he not built himself a fort upon the whole earth? Has he not the victory over the saints? Does he not dwell in the temple of the highest? Does he not triumph in the cities of the whole world? But his victories are without comfort; without pleasure his dwelling places. For he knows his time is at hand. He that now gives freedom shall become bound.

'Compare fond knowledge with true wisdom, your spirits of lying, with us that are the voice of truth; the vanity that they lead you into, and the reward of our message; and say to yourself, peccavi, I have sinned. Will you be persuaded by experience? Consider your imprisonments, your affliction and shame of body.'

Is this confirmation that Kelly had been imprisoned? Is the 'shame of body' confirmation of his cropped ear? Is the affliction his limp that is sometimes referred to? Or is it all metaphorical? Or even rhetorical?

'Weigh with yourself the vanity of your life; your rash footsteps, all that happened to you, by the society and, as you think, comfort; but indeed the stinging pricks of your enemies. Since we came to you, sent from the lord and calling you to God, you have been delivered from them; from a place full of fornication and the wrath of God, exalted to the skirts of worldly honour, and have been satisfied for the necessities of the world. Holy is the money that is gotten righteously, but accursed are the evils that are reaped with wrong.

'Consider with yourself,' said Gabriel, 'for the lord speaks not once more till you have fulfilled your own judgement.'

'I will be contented to bury them in the field and not to use them or come at them,' said Kelly, 'and that I will swear upon the Bible to perform, and if they are earthly I will commit them to the earth, and so separate those shingles from the place near the spring; and in this manner fulfil my own judgement; for I will not be obstinate but commit all things to the end.'

Were these written conjurations or the apparatus of ritual magic?

‘Because you are content to bury them and upon faith in the promises of God to abjure them in simplicity of heart and external use, the lord accepts it and it shall be sufficient Further you have twenty-seven confirmations of sin and consent with the devil which your intention calls characters, whereby those twenty-seven, like their mother, have become familiar and pleasant with you. They must be brought before the lord and offered into his hands. For so long as they are, the wicked always vex you; for the obligation burned the condition is void. These must be buried with the rest.’

‘Which rest?’ said Kelly.

How much more did he have?

‘But must be brought and burned here before the presence of God that, the cause diminished, the effect may perish.’

‘I will be contented to bury them likewise, beseeching the almighty to accept my intent herein as of the rest specified before.’

‘He is contented, but let one be burned. You may suffer one to testify the discredit of the rest. It is but according to the grounds of your own magic.’

‘I do not understand your meaning here.’

‘The radius of the part may be likewise of the whole body,’ Gabriel said.

‘I do not understand that either.’

‘Magic works effects in things absent that it does in their parts being present. The wicked kill the absent body but the present garment. So are all of one confederacy, disgraced by the confusion of one. You are content to bury them all upon the confident and sure hope of the promises of the God of light, and to bring one as a confirmation of your promise to testify your obedience as concerning the whole, which one burned and abjured may be a testimony to the angels that you are obedient for God’s sake and for his testimony and truth. But this you shall burn with brimstone only, whose ashes shall be kept as a testimony till the rest are also consumed. This you shall do next Monday at the rising of the sun. That the number of the time may be one of bigness.

‘For before August those keys shall be delivered to you which give entrance, yea, even into the privy chambers of wisdom, of which you shall have fourteen by next Monday.’

22

‘We are desirous to know whether thus this day’s action shall be finished,’ Dee asked, ‘and whether we shall fast still as was prescribed.’

‘Detract not from the day that which is commanded,’ said Gabriel. ‘We are very desirous

to understand of the present estate of the Lord Albert Laski, since we were willed to go with him and he was linked to us in some part of our actions. To understand of his state would be to our great comfort.'

'It needs not, for the world herself is at hand.'

'Truly, I do not understand your speech,' Dee persisted. 'Is he coming back again?'

'What we are commanded we know, and further than of our commandment is error. He is in his hand that knows how to use him.'

'I see a man climbing a hedge,' said Kelly, 'and as he clambers over, the stakes break and he falls down. Now he is going up between two trees towards a meadow. Now he has both the boughs in his hand, standing still on the ground. Now he goes lower, there is a gap, and through that he is gone into a meadow.'

'So it is of Laski,' said a voice.

'This is dark,' said Dee, 'it may please you to give us some light.'

'This is more than enough for the matter. Cease to ask these things here where it is said no impure thing should enter.'

Note, wrote Dee at the end of the account of this action, at this present was one come and in the house, of whom we did not know till he was gone, whom the Lord Laski had sent to certify to us that first, he was in some cumber and hindrance. Secondly, how Fabius, his brother-in-law, and another, had given him counsel to proceed very rashly, but leaving that. Thirdly, by the gap and open way with estate of the commons, or citizens, by their great zeal and favour, that he obtained his purpose. This in effect we understood at the messenger's return after noon, which marvellously exactly answered the former show.

Laski's improvidence was finally catching up with him. Some time in the course of 1584 he finally went bankrupt.

23

Dee added a further note. Remember that on Saturday afternoon the Chancellor came to Kraków with sixty coaches in his company and train; he bringing in a close coach, covered with red, the Lord Samuel Zborowski prisoner, whom he took on Friday night before at his sister's house, being separated from his soldiers and servants, etc.

Zborowski had been banished by Henry de Valois ten years earlier. After taking refuge in Transylvania he had returned illegally to Poland. Initially Stephen had disregarded his return, but when Zborowski began feuding with his neighbours, Stephen had him seized and promptly executed. It was an event that divided the nobles and provided a focus of opposition to King

Stephen's rule. Laski was closely involved with the Zborowski faction in its opposition to Stephen and in its pro-Habsburg policies.

Walsingham received a report on Zborowski's arrest from one of his correspondents, Arthur Champernowne, who had arrived in Kraków in late May. 'Some days before our arrival, the Chancellor, sent by commission of the King, had caused to be beheaded the Seigneur Samuel Zborowski, of one of the principal families of Poland. Divers reasons are given, some saying that it was on the discovery of a conspiracy plotted by him against the King, others that it was done to satisfy the Turk, because during his exile (which has lasted ever since King Henry left Poland) he had often plundered and overrun the Turk's country and killed some of his men. However this may be, he has been put to death to the great displeasure both of the people and the nobles. His brother, the Marshal of the Court of Poland, when he lifted up the dead body, and went out from the gates of Kraków, harangued the people and the nobles, inciting them to pity, complaining of the wrong done to him, and imploring their aid in avenging it, which they granted him by cries and clapping of hands. He has had the corpse embalmed and preserved, in order to present it before the nobles at the general Convocation of the Estates in September next. It is confidently believed that the nobles will endeavour to restrain the too great authority which the King gives himself by despatching important affairs without calling them into counsel, and doing many other things against both their privileges and his own oath, wishing to be as he says, king in deed and not only in name.'

And then the report went on: 'I found an Englishman with his family at Kraków, called Mr Dee, who, as is said, has followed Laski, quitting a certain estate for an uncertain hope. It is to be feared that he will repent of it at leisure.'

24

Saturday, May 14, Dee records, Kelly said he had done that with the trash specified as he thought would be acceptable to the lord; and as concerning one of the twenty-seven characters, he had left it with me ever since the last action to be burned at this day's action, and it lay ready by me. Our instructors appeared at Kelly's very first looking into the show stone.

'Do you wish,' asked Dee, 'that I shall now execute this burning of the character here as a sacrifice to the highest of our humility and obedience?'

'Not as a sacrifice but as a victory,' said Gabriel.

'Shall I then do it, I pray you?' asked Dee. 'As with the consent of my yoke-fellow and so all one to be taken as his action.'

'He that does righteously offers up a sacrifice.'

‘It is true that he that is obedient and does well is accepted with the lord.’

‘I took sacrifice to be only with blood,’ said Kelly.

‘This is a sacrifice because it is done righteously,’ said Gabriel.

‘You said, not as a sacrifice but as a victory,’ said Kelly.

‘He that overcomes his enemy rejoiced not for friendship’s sake but for victory. Open your mouth and say before the lord, “The spirit of God has descended. And he has entered into judgement with me and I am condemned. But where justice dwells, mercy also dwells. For my idolatry is forgotten before the lord.” Edward Kelly, have you committed idolatry?’

‘He speaks on your behalf, Mr Kelly,’ said Dee.

‘I will therefore open my mouth saying, I have erred,’ said Kelly. ‘I will open my mouth also and confess my sins, and I will vow unto the lord against the wicked. And I will say to the lord, lo here are the spoils of bloody blasphemy. Behold, oh you angels, a blasphemy and against the highest. Behold the wickedness of Ascondam.’

Dee noted in the margin, He names some secret discourse, meditation or prayer and also action of Kelly’s as I conjecture.

There is also a note in the margin relating to Ascondam but most of it has been erased.

‘Bear with me for I have fulfilled his commandments. Bear witness with me that I do not return and rejoice. For such are the spoils of the wicked.’

‘Are you content to consent hereunto?’ asked Gabriel.

‘What I have done with the rest, God and they (if they be of God) know,’ said Kelly.

‘Upon the foresaid conditions I am contented to have this character burned. Let it be burned.’

I burned it immediately, Dee records, with the flame of brimstone, and brought the last burnt black coal or cinder of it to the table and laid it on a paper.

‘Now, oh lord, darkness is confounded. Let your light shine in us and your truth prevail.’

And then the dictations proceeded.

‘All things go forward, let us go forward,’ said Nalvage.

‘Move not, for the place is holy,’ instructed Gabriel.

‘Not backward as you were wont to do, but forward.’

Things were speeding up.

‘Sapah zimii duiv od noas taquanis adroch dorphal caosg od foonts ...’

SEVEN : GO TO THE EMPEROR

1

Kraków , Monday, May 21, 1584.

A creature appeared in the stone who was jolly and green with a long robe like green velvet. His hair was long like yellow gold. There was nothing on his head but his hair. He stood as though he stood in a cloud, above the usual pavement in the air.

‘He puts his right hand out of the stone, being grasped together. Now he opens his hand and it is written in; and it is so far from me that I cannot read it; yet he seems to be nearer to me, very much more than his hand. The writing seems to be like the leaf of a book.’

Thus it was written: Have an eye to my foretelling. Troubles. Sudden sorrow is at hand in all the earth. No, his ship is almost built. Laski, if he serve me, shall be king of Poland. If he serve another his bowels shall fall out before him with poison.

Do these recurrent speculations about Laski’s acquiring the Polish crown suggest that the reigning monarch, King Stephen, was believed to be sick and likely to die? Or do they relate to dissatisfactions with Stephen amongst the nobles who had elected him? Were they hoping he would abscond and abdicate like his predecessor, Henry of Anjou?

‘Who is Laski, to serve, oh lord, but you?’ Dee asked, ‘to keep your laws, statutes and commandments? Not to depend upon any creatures.’

‘The king and chancellor have sold the people of this land and are sworn Turks. Do not return home to Laško, Laski, for if you do you shall offend me. Go to the Emperor, for I will comfort you with his favour. Let him not return from there till he is warned by me.’

‘You mean the Emperor’s court?’ asked Dee.

The Holy Roman Emperor, Rudolf II, had come to the throne in 1576. In 1583 he had transferred his court from Vienna to Prague.

‘I beseech you, by what token shall he receive your warning?’

‘You be his right hand to his body and his mouth to me. I will be merciful to him and hold up his head.’

Once again they were instructed to move, once again they were to uproot themselves. Now the pressure was on to move to Prague.

2

‘There are thirty calls yet to come,’ they were told. ‘These thirty are the calls of princes and spiritual governors to whom the earth is delivered as a portion. These bring in, and again

dispose, kings and all the governments upon the earth. These are generally governed by the twelve angels of the twelve tribes, which are also governed by the seven which stood before the presence of God.

They were all spirits of the air, they were told, and they bear no name.

‘What is without a name?’ asked Kelly.

‘Understand them therefore by the first, second, third, to thirtieth air, to be nominated, “Oh thou the twentieth air, oh thou the sixteenth air, etc.”’

Then they were given a series of names.

‘Mark diligently. Occodon. Answers to the angel of the ninth, which is of the first, which occupies the first place of the first air. It is the name of that part of the earth which is governed by the angel of the ninth tribe, and those that are under him in the first division.’

And on they went: Valgars, Doagnis, Pacasna ... Forty-two names were delivered.

3

At the end of the session Dee requested, ‘May I be bold to ask you one question?’

‘You may,’ said Gabriel.

‘Is the Queen of England alive or dead?’

‘She lives,’ said Gabriel. But he reminded Dee, ‘I am nothing near the earth.’

The curtain was drawn.

They prayed some prayers, and then upon Dee’s motion for the Lord Laski, how to deal with the chancellor, the curtain was drawn open. The creature in the green who had appeared earlier in the day came into the stone and spoke to them.

‘We are desirous to know your name,’ said Dee.

‘My name is called Dic Illis,’ he said. ‘I am one under Gabriel, and the name of Jesus I know and honour.’

‘Jesus declared his name and so have other good creatures to us before,’ said Dee.

‘My name is Mapsama.’

‘Is Dic Illis the etymology of that?’

‘It is.’

‘How much it imports for us to understand the best counsel that is to be given to Albert Laski, you know, etc.,’ said Dee.

‘I am commanded and I have done my commandment,’ said Mapsama. ‘But see that you and he fulfil those things that are commanded to you by me.’

‘You said, I should be his mouth to you. How shall I execute that, I pray you?’

‘Not to me but to God.’

‘By prayer, do you mean?’

‘Yes, and by presence.’

‘By presence with whom?’

‘You shall go from here with him to the Emperor. God will stir up further matter by your presence there.’

Here it was again, the instruction to go to Prague. ‘Shall all our lessons be finished and sufficient power be delivered to us according to the promise of God?’

‘You shall be able to practice by Sunday.’

4

Dee asked for instruction on the application of the calls to specific regions of the earth. But before it could be given, he records, there happened a great storm or temptation to E. K., of doubting and misliking our instructors and their doings, and of contemning and condemning anything that I knew or could do. I bore all things patiently for God’s sake, and at length the curtain was opened and they appeared.

‘I am contented to see and to make true report of what they will show,’ said Kelly, ‘but my heart stands against them.’

‘The time shall come that the oak that is beaten with every storm shall be a dining-table in the prince’s hall,’ said Gabriel. ‘The swallow flies swift but where she lights there is no remembrance of her being: such are the words of man. But our words are like a swift arrow that enters and sticks where it lights.’

A great globe appeared, turning upon two axletrees. The geography lesson began.

Dee, the mathematician, the scientist, asked for the countries to be given by their longitudes and latitudes, but Nalvage refused.

‘Our manner is not as it is of worldlings,’ said Nalvage. ‘We determine places not after the forms of legs, or as leaves are; neither can we imagine anything after the fashion of a horn, as those that are cosmographers do.’

‘There appears a great water, long and narrow, reddish, and by it appears written Egypt,’ said Kelly. ‘He has in his hand written Syria. And of that he said that it was the second of the first. Now appears a very fine land and region in which appears a great city at the edge of it. There appears written Mesopotamia. The third of the first ...

‘Now appears a large portion of the earth wherein appear bears, a great river from a hill going into the sea with three mouths. The word written, Cappadocia. The second of the second.

Written in his hand Tuscia.’

‘Do you mean Tuscia by Italy?’

‘The third of the second, written Parva Asia. The first, Hircania. Mare Caspium appeared by it. The second, Thracia. The last: here appear people going into caves of the ground and dwelling in caves; they are longhaired men, naked. Here appear great hills, and the veins of the goldmines appear. The men seem to have baskets of leather. This is one of the places under the Arctic Pole, written Gosmar.’

‘Is it so called by the people of the country?’ Dee asked.

‘Even at this hour,’ said Nalvage.

On it went, a survey of the regions of the world in all their exotica and mystery.

‘Here appear people very beastly with mantles on their shoulders: and beasts with long snouts: India.

‘Here appear great rotten trees, very old, great woods of them. Beyond the woods are great hills. Great fens appear and great marish ground. Fowls as big as swans, green, scaled on their backs, in the water.’

Sometimes Dee remarked on the names.

‘Phalagon.’

‘I never heard of it.’

‘It is toward the north, where the veins of gold and such people appear as were noted before. On this side of them a great way appear men with swinish snouts, their visage is so strouted out; but to be perceived to be of human visage. The women have about their privities very long hair down to their knees. The men have things on their shoulders of beasts’ skins, instead of a jerkin or a mandilion.’

Groynland as I think, Dee noted in the margin.

‘Germany. Men like Dutchmen with leather nether stocks. Trenam. Here appear monkeys, great flocks. The people have leather coats, and no beards, thick leather, and garters. Constantinople: the seat of that great devil the Turk. He is but tenant at will. Handsome men in gathered, tucked garments, and their shoes come up to the middle of their legs, of various coloured leather, beyond Hispaniola. It is a low country, great piles of stones like St Andrew’s crosses. Two notable rivers. The women have great covertures over their heads, coming from their shoulders, as the Hoyks in Flanders. There are on this side of it a great number of dead carcasses. It is beyond Gia pan.’

‘Then it is that land which I used to call Atlantis,’ said Dee.

‘They stretch more near the west,’ said Nalvage. ‘They are twenty-five kingdoms in it.

‘A very old castle stands on the side of the top of a very high hill. It seems to be made of wood. It seems four cornered,’ Kelly reported.

‘I beseech you, what is that castle?’ asked Dee.

‘It is the Ark of Noah,’ said Nalvage.

There comes from heaven like a mist, Kelly reported, and covers a great place, about three hundred miles long, like a park, enclosed with fire. It is on a high ground. There come four rivers out of it, one east, another west, another north, and another south. The pales or enclosures of it seem to be arches beset most richly with precious stones. In the gate of it stand three men like us, one is in a long gown with many pleats, the other like in a cassock. The third in the rough skin of a beast. In the name of Jesus, is this the Paradise that Adam was banished out of?’

‘The very same. From here he was turned out into the earth. This is the true vale of Josaphat.’

‘Will you give me leave?’ asked Dee.

‘Say on.’

‘It would seem this must be on the earth, not in the air.’

A material Paradise.

‘It is upon the earth.’

‘You said that from here he was turned out into the earth.’

‘The curse of God in Adam caused the earth, where he was sent, to be accursed. For if Adam had after his fall stayed in Paradise, his wickedness would have altered the innocence of the place. Therefore Paradise is distinguished from the earth in respect of her purity, because the earth is defiled and corrupted of man. The earth is said to be sinful in respect of the sin of man.’

‘To forty-five degrees, both northerly and southerly, all is known in the most part of the world,’ said Dee. ‘But of any such place there is no knowledge nor likelihood by any history of these days or of old time.’

‘Therefore this is cunning and the wisdom of God. There dwells in flesh in it that shall never die, which were taken up for a testimony of truth.’

‘Eli and Enoch by the Apocalypse do seem that they should suffer death under Antichrist, if we understand right,’ said Dee. ‘There is Eli, Enoch and John. They shall seem to be dead by his power but not dead.’

The visions continued.

‘Men with talons like lions. They are very devils. There are five isles of them. These are

they that can dwell in any part of the earth, and are called Pilosi. Nothing differs them but in that they have bodies.'

'Under the South Pole. Here appear little men with long beards, their bodies as children's bodies. There dwells the wonderful Emperor of the World, and the wonderful city of the world. Here are one hundred and twelve kingdoms. This city is a hundred and forty-six leagues around.'

'You understand two English miles for a league, as in France?' asked Dee.

'Aye.'

He points to a great city with a river by it.

'This is that city which shall not have one stone standing in it. This city is in Italy.'

'Is it Rome?' asked Dee.

'It is Rome.'

People appeared with one eye in their head, seeming to be in their breast, toward the equinoctial.

'I remember people called the Arimaspi,' said Dee.

They were the one-eyed northern Europeans who tried to take the gold guarded by griffins. 'How I killed the Arimaspi,' who was that, Othello?

'This day's lesson is worth as much as everything between this and Mauritania,' said Nalvage.

But Dee always had just one more question.

'I hear nothing of Polonia, Moscovia, Dania, Hibernia, Islandia and so of many others which I could name,' said Dee. 'What is to be thought of those, in respect of the distribution of the whole face of the earth?'

'Polonia and Moscovia are of Saromatia. Denmark, Ireland, Friesland are of Britain. And so it is of the rest.'

'I beseech you to what part is Atlantis and the annexed places under the king of Spain called the West Indies?' Dee asked.

'When these thirty appear, they can each tell what they can. Prepare for tomorrow's action.'

'Most gladly,' said Dee.

'If you prove yourself true,' Kelly told them, 'you shall win me to God.'

Because E. K. did not come, according as it was bidden yesterday, to follow the action on, I went to his study door and knocked for him, and I requested him to come, Dee records.

He refused to do so, and gave me a short and resolute answer, that he would never more have to do with these actions.

I asked him the reason why. He would give none, but earnestly refused to proceed.

I told him that his words last night, those words he spoke after the action had been ended for more than an hour in the chamber before my study of practice, that he could not deal today, did very much grieve me, etc. Wherefore he made small account.

So I went into my study again and committed the cause to God.

After half an hour or less he came speedily out of his study and brought in his hand a volume of Cornelius Agrippa's works, and in one chapter of that book he read the names of countries and provinces collected out of Ptolemy, as the author there notes.

Cornelius Agrippa, *Occult Philosophy*, Book 1, chapter 31: 'How Provinces and Kingdoms are Distributed to the Planets.'

Whereupon, Kelly inferred that our spiritual instructors were cozeners to give us a description of the world taken out of other books. And therefore he would have no more to do with them.

I replied and said, I was very glad you have a book of your own in which those geographical names are expressed, such as for the most part those instructors have delivered to us. And that, according to the tenor and form of my request to him so to have them expressed for our more perfect information by those known names; to understand those ninety-one unknown and unheard of names, of seven letters each, by which they, our instructors, I mean, are very greatly to be thanked and to be deemed in all reasonable men's judgement, most friendly, and far from cozenage or abuse of us.

And further, I said, that I myself had here set down on paper all the ninety-one names together in order as we received them, and that I had brought here the geographical description of the whole earthly globe – Gerardus's *Universal Chart of the World*, he noted in the margin, and also Pomponius Mela set forth in English with the charts belonging to it, fairly described by hand – to the intent that he might see the truth of their words delivered to us yesterday, for the performance of my request made to them last Tuesday in this form of words, as the book has it recorded thus: "As you gave us a taste or warning of Italia and Britannia so if it be thought good to you we are desirous to understand of the rest, the application to such names as we understand."

'By which you may see,' I said to E. K., 'how your reason is marvellously confounded by

your wilful fantasy. For so much as wherein you would find fault in our spiritual instructors' doings, therein they have done what I requested them. As appeared. And that to the intent that we might understand which angels had the government of known countries, for such purposes as occasion might offer or require our practices to be tried in.

'This,' I said, 'is to gross your error and to wilful your wrangling. But I more carefully peruse and consider their words and doings, in which though sometimes something in my writings after your declaration has been amended by them, yet the occasion of miswriting for the most part has been either in your misreporting what you saw and heard, or in my wrong hearing, or writing. And sometimes by the spiritual immediate correcting of my writing, and sometimes long after, etc.'

But for all this E. K. remained of his wilful intent, and so departed to his study again.

And I committed God's cause into his own hands, care and ordering, as may be best for his honour and glory. So be it.

6

'Let the day that I will visit you be unknown to you,' Mapsama told them, 'and let the end of my gardening be yet hid from you.'

'I thought you would say so,' said Kelly.

A perverse speech, Dee noted in the margin.

'But this you shall do,' said Mapsama. 'Bind up together forty-eight leaves whose skin shall be as silver, whose perimeter shall be thirty inches, in length eight, in breadth seven.'

'Do you require it to be parchment or paper?' Dee asked.

'I have said,' said Mapsama, aka Dic Illis.

'What should I do then after I have caused forty-eight leaves to be bound?'

'This done, rise up and perform your journey as you are commanded.'

'I have heard only of the binding of one book. Do you mean after the binding of the book that this journey shall be entered into?'

'Yes,' said Mapsama.

'What shall I do with the book after I have bound it?' Dee asked.

'I will answer for him,' said Kelly; 'burn it.'

Perverse, Dee noted in the margin.

'The fourteenth day,' said Mapsama, pointing to the diaper cloth, 'even this tablecloth and none other shall be spread for a banquet, to which you shall invite the angels of the lord. In the midst of the table lay down the book and go forth. For man is not worthy to write that shall be

written: neither shall there be found many worthy to open that book.

‘I have entered already into the Emperor’s heart. But it may be he will become wilful. If he does, a hundred and twelve days remain and he is not. For I have cut down the banks, the waters may rush out, that there may be sudden alteration in this, now, time. When I warn you, you shall return.

‘Three days before you take your voyage you shall meet me here, for I have something to say to you which shall be hidden till then. Let Laski stretch out his limbs. For I will love him and let him gape wide. And take much for the vessel is wide that he shall drink from. Let him not despair.’

We must go to the Emperor, Dee noted. The place for which my angel of creation is sealed. I understand as yet either the Emperor’s court, or Prague, etc.

Meanwhile the imminent end of the world was assured. Gabriel told them, ‘These are the latter days. And this is the last prophecy of the world. Now shall one king rise up against another and there shall be bloodshed throughout all the worlds.’

7

Monday, June 4, Gabriel gave another strong warning about Kelly’s continuing to deal with evil spirits.

‘I speak to you,’ he said to Kelly, ‘have you not run astray from the lord and committed idolatry?’

He told Kelly of his faults which Kelly would not express to Dee.

‘As long as you deal with wicked spirits will the lord keep back his hands, and you keep back the lord. For shall it not be said hereafter, lo, is not this man known to have dealing with the wicked? With further arguments by repetition of your doings.

‘The angels of darkness appear to you either for the greatness of your wickedness, or else because they suspect you to be elected. If you therefore think yourself elected, despise them; if you therefore think to be a spirit dignified and in glory, then be faithful in the assurance of hope and resist the devil.’

‘He weeps,’ said Kelly, and neither Dee nor Kelly could hold back their tears.

‘Ah, my brother, great are the joys of heaven. Remember what hell is, for to you the furnace was open. Remember the vision you had of hell and of her powers at Mortlake. For nothing, my brother, is done without a cause. Remember you could not abide it, no not to see.’

Kelly very plainly and at large made manifest his conversion to God from the practices with wicked spirits. Yea, that he was ready to burn whatsoever he had of their trash and experiments. That he would write in a book the manifold horrible doctrine of theirs, whereby they would have persuaded him that Jesus was not God; that no prayer ought to be made to Jesus; that there is no sin; that man's soul goes from one body to another child's quickening or animation; that as many men and women as are now have always been, that is, so many human bodies and human souls, neither more nor less, as are now, have always been; that the generation of mankind from Adam and Eve is not a history but a writing which has another sense; no Holy Ghost they acknowledged; they would not suffer him to pray to Jesus Christ but would rebuke him saying, that he robbed God of his honour, etc. And so of very many other most blasphemous articles and points of doctrine.

They waited two and a half hours but the spiritual instructors did not appear in the stone.

Moreover, Kelly declared, that about nine or ten days past he intended to have gotten away secretly by the spiritual help of those he had so long dealt with, and therefore that till now he dealt hypocritically.

But whereas before they were always accustomed to threaten him with beggary, a thing which he most hated and feared, now he does not care if he should have want; he took it neither to be a shame nor sin to beg; and that he now made more account of God's former and eternal life than he does of all transitory wealth and riches, and to be entangled with the danger of these wicked spirits' snares.

Also he now perceived his great error in which he had lately been, when he would for an assured temporal maintenance have forsaken dealing with the wicked, and so more willingly would have followed these actions without repining; saying now, that he is no perfect Christian who for money must be hired to forsake the devil and his works, etc.

And for the issue of these actions he would never either doubt or mislike however they fell out; assuring himself that God would do all things best, and for his honour.

Laski had agreed to give Kelly an annual pension of four hundred dollars. It is unclear if Kelly was also receiving the fifty pounds a year Dee had offered to pay him. Since both Laski and Dee were in debt, it is also unclear how much or how regularly Kelly was ever paid. Certainly Kelly was complaining the following year that Laski had not paid him. His financial anxieties were not unreasonable.

Monday, June 18, 8 a.m., records Dee, as we craved earnestly for comfort to be given to Laski being somewhat oppressed with pensiveness to see his own subjects and servants triumph against him in his low estate from high, and all for lack of money and wealth, etc., suddenly a mighty long and big arm and hand appeared in the air to catch at the show stone. And E. K. meaning to save it from him put his hand on the stone and immediately the stone was out of the frame, we do not know how, and lay by on the cushion.

Soon after Gabriel appeared in his usual manner on the right side of the stone, that is, against Kelly's right hand as usual.

'I pray you what was that that would have snatched the show stone?' Kelly asked.

'Let his house come that his iniquity may be seen,' said Gabriel.

'I see many houses,' said Kelly, 'and besides them a fair house, separate by itself. The house is of stone and wood and a square thing in the end of it like a turret.'

This seems to be Grodno Castle in Littaw, Lithuania, where the king is now, Dee noted. (Grodno, some 560 kilometres north east of Kraków, is now in Belorussia). With the Lublin union of 1569, Lithuania and Poland had formed a two-state union, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which lasted for two centuries.

'The houses of the town are low wooden houses, small. There appear in that odd house fellows in red coats like Poland coats. Now I see a big man sitting within the house before the window, and the house is hung with Turkish carpets, and there is wrought in one of the carpets, just before the door, a man on horseback with a sword in his hand.'

The arms of Littaw, Dee noted.

'And the man is like the man I saw at Mortlake with a wart on his cheek. Two boys stand by him. A man stands by with a sword, which he delivers to him that sits, and he looks at it, being gilt and graven on it, and lays it down on the table.'

There seem to be magical characters, Dee noted.

'This is a sword in which he puts his trust,' said Gabriel, 'but it shall fail him.'

'Now that man calls the smaller boy to him and the boy thereupon runs along a gallery. Now that man with the wart goes out after, strouting himself, swaggering, and nobody with him; now he calls the smaller boy to him and makes a sign to him, smiting one hand on another and drawing it under his throat, as though he threatened the boy unless he kept secret. Now he comes to a door and knocks and one like an Italian lets him in. There he has in the corner a frame of wood and a great stone in the middle of it, of about sixteen inches square, and there is a fire on that stone, on the middle of it. Now he takes that engine or frame with the fire between

him and that man like an Italian, and carries it into another chamber. There they have a dead man's hand. Now he takes out of his casket a black box of iron as it seems by the blackness of it. The box is about a foot long. Now he has set down the box and it is open and in it appears an image of wax of blackish colour, like shoemaker's wax. There is one like an angel made of red stuff, standing at the head of the image, holding like a scarf over the face of the image. The image is marvellously scratched and razed, or very rudely made with knobs and dents in the legs of it. Now he looks four ways and speaks (the man with the wart on his face). The house aforementioned seems to stand outside the stone and beyond the stone. Now they pour blood out of a basin upon the fire, and lay the hand upon it; and it fries in the fire. Now he and the Italian-like man have put on black apparel like gowns, each of them, and the engine seems not to be set in a chimney.'

'Be it as it was,' said Gabriel.

'There are six smokes like six men standing about them,' said Kelly, 'and they go like smokes out at a window and there stands one like a giant man and he takes them and winds them up as they come out at the window. Now all that show is vanished away.'

'This is the cause that Laski is poor,' said Gabriel. 'This is the seventh image that he has scraped so.'

'As it is the seventh so, I trust, it is the last,' said Dee.

'This is three years, four months and ten days since they began,' said Gabriel, 'so long has the angel of the lord been ready for your safeguard, oh Laski, standing at the window and ready to bind up mischief prepared against you.'

All the stone became full of smoke.

'Are you sure that the sun shines?' said Gabriel, pointing at Dee.

'I am as much as my eye may judge,' said Dee.

'So sure it is, that he shall reign and be the king of Poland.'

'Always I understand a condition, if he do, etc.,' said Dee. 'The will of God be done to his honour and to the comfort of his elect'

And now Gabriel told them again, 'Make haste for your journey.'

'Oh lord,' said Dee, 'the man is ready, in manner, but wants ability and to ask your help we dare not, but as your will is, so be it.'

'To talk with God for money is a folly,' said Gabriel; 'to talk with God for mercy is great wisdom.'

'Lord, this mighty arm and hand which appeared here and would have snatched at the stone, what was it and who sent it?' Dee asked.

‘It is a wicked power which the king’s enchanters have sent amongst you, but he has his reward for returning,’ said Gabriel.

‘What was his intent?’ Dee asked. ‘I marvel that his enchanters were able to detect any of our doings to the king.’

‘The king does not know your doings,’ Gabriel assured them.

‘As concerning the forty-eight leaves commanded to be bound and to be silvered,’ Dee asked, ‘what if I caused seven white leaves to be bound before, and seven behind, for the more aptness for the binding?’

‘Use your own judgement,’ said Gabriel. ‘God will appear no more to you until you take your journey.’

10

On Friday and especially Saturday, June 22 and 23, Dee records, Kelly had great temptations not to credit this previous action, and was told by a voice how our instructors would use cavillation of our disordered life to forsake us and not to perform according to our expectation of the former promises to be performed by them. A voice said likewise to him that Laski should not go to the Emperor’s court for lack of money, for he should get none there. Likewise it willed him to go up into his study and he would show him all the effect of our instruction received. E. K. complained to me how he was thus grievously molested by such means and almost brought to despair.

But I comforted him as well as I could, myself being inwardly most sorrowful, and made my moan to God by prayer when I was alone, for him and our cause. Moreover, he could not be persuaded by me that good angels would undertake to help us to have any relief by money or treasure, affirming that it appertained to the wicked ones, seeing they were the lords of this world and the kingdom of God was not of this world.

While Dee was writing this note at his lodgings by St Stephens, Kelly was at Laski’s lodging at the Franciscan friars where Laski lay at physic.

11

A square table appeared made of earth, like potter’s clay, very raw earth. It was the table of the earth of those that govern the earth. Hovering above the table appeared an infinite sort of things like worms, sometimes going up and sometimes down. These seemed somewhat brightish. Over these higher in the air appeared an infinite sort of small little blackish things, bigger than motes in the sun, and they went up and down and sometimes came among those

worm-like creatures.

‘The lord appeared to Enoch,’ said Ave, ‘and was merciful to him, opened his eyes that he might see the earth, which was unknown to his parents by reason of their fall. For the lord said, “Let us show to Enoch the use of the earth.” And after fifty days Enoch had written; and this was the title of his books, let those that fear God and are worthy read.

‘But behold the people grew wicked and became unrighteous and the spirit of the lord was far off and gone away from them. So that those that were unworthy began to read. And the kings of the earth said thus against the lord, “What is it that we cannot do? Or who is he that can resist us?” And the lord was vexed and he sent in amongst them one hundred and fifty lions and spirits of wickedness, error and deceit, and they appeared to them, for the lord had put them between those that are wicked and his good angels; and they began to counterfeit the doings of God and his power for they had power given them to do so, so that the memory of Enoch washed away; and the spirits of error began to teach them doctrines; which from time to time to this age and to this day have spread abroad into all parts of the world, and is the skill and cunning of the wicked. So has the devil delivered to the wicked the signs and tokens of his error and hatred towards God, whereby they in using them might consent with their fall, and so become partakers with them of their reward, which is eternal damnation. These they call characters, a lamentable thing. For by these many souls have perished.

‘Now it has pleased God to deliver this doctrine again out of darkness, and to fulfil his promise with you for the books of Enoch, to whom he says as he said to Enoch, “Let those that are worthy understand this, by you, that it may be one witness of my promise towards you.”

‘Write what you see.’

‘I cannot,’ Kelly said.

‘Endeavour to do your best,’ said Dee, ‘for he that bids you do will also give you power to do.’

‘You heard one here say I write my own damnation,’ said Kelly.

‘He might have said you write his damnation. Pray, and write as many more lines.’

After a while Kelly finished the four parts of the table with great ease. Then they were told to cease for an hour. When they resumed Kelly was told, ‘Take the first square. Write from the left hand towards the right. Write small and large letters. Say what you see.’

T 2 i 1 a f A u 11 p a ...’

And now line after line was dictated. The instructions continued the following day.

‘First, generally what this table contains.

‘1: All human knowledge.

‘2: Out of it springs physic, medicine.

‘3: The knowledge of all elemental creatures amongst you. How many kinds there are and for what use they were created. Those that live in the air by themselves. Those that live in the waters by themselves. Those that dwell in the earth by themselves. The property of the fire, which is the secret life of all things.

‘4: The knowledge, finding and use of metals, the virtues of them, the congelations and virtues of stones. They are all of one matter.

‘5: The conjoining and knitting together of natures. The destruction of nature and of things that may perish.

6: Moving from place to place, as into this country or that country at pleasure.

7: The knowledge of all mechanical crafts.

8: The transmutation of the form but not the essence.’

In the margin Dee noted: the ninth chapter may be added and is of the secrets of men knowing, whereof there is a peculiar table.

Then Ave said to Kelly, who had a bad migraine, ‘Your sickness makes me sick.’

Kelly was not amused.

Dee noted, ‘a great trepidation fell on E. K. upon E. K.’s taking these words to be a scoff which were words of compassion and friendship.’

12

The tables gave the names of angels, good and bad, who could be summoned.

‘Every name, sounding of three letters, beginning out of that line, is the name of a devil or wicked angel, as well from the right as from the left, excepting the four angels that are above the cross which have no participation with devils.’

Some were for medicine.

‘The one is to call them, the other is to command them. If it be an incurable disease in the judgement of man, then add the letter that stands against the name and make him up to five. Then he cures miraculously. But if you will send sickness, then take two of the letters and add the letter of the cross to that, as in the second. Then he is a wicked power and brings disease, and when you call him, call him by the name of God backward, for to him, so, he is a god; and so constrain him backward, as Ogiodi.’

Others had a more political application.

‘Herein you may find the secrets of kings, and so to the lowest degree. Notwithstanding, to know the world before the waters, to be privy to the doings of from the waters to Christ,

from Christ to the rewarding of the wicked, the wicked doings of the flesh or the fond and devilish imaginations of man, or to see what the blessed kingdom shall be and how the earth shall be dignified, purged and made clean, is a meat too sweet for your mouths.’

‘Curiosity is far from out intent,’ said Dee.

‘But there is neither patriarch nor prophet sanctified, martyr or confessor, king or governor of the people upon the earth, that his name, continuance and end is not in these tables,’ said Ave.

‘One book of perfect paper, one labour of a few days. The calling them together, and the yielding of their promise, the repetition of the names of God, are sufficient. I have given you corn; I have given you also ground. Desire God to give you ability to till.’

‘When would you that I should prepare that book,’ Dee asked, ‘and what do you call perfect, and how many leaves would you wish me to make it of?’

‘Your book is not of my charge,’ said Ave, and vanished.

Dee asked that Madini might be sent, ‘in respect of this strange dealing with us and leaving us by Ave.’

She came and Dee asked about Ave’s sudden departure.

‘Surely, sir, I cannot tell, but I will go see if my mother can tell,’ she said.

But all she offered on her return was, ‘My mother says you should have been at the Emperor’s.’

‘But you see it is impossible to get there without some good provision of money made by our great friend Laski,’ said Dee.

13

About seven o’clock this afternoon E. K. came up again into my study, wrote Dee: and seeing me reading and considering this action, began to find talk of it and willed me to try the practice of it if I understood it. And to be brief, by little and little fell to this issue, that he confessed himself to be very sorry that he was so far raging in words as he was this day.

‘Nay, I said, ‘any other living man would have found just cause of comfort and to give thanks to Ave, such speeches to him as he used to you upon true compassion, and no scoff etc. But you by and by called him devil and raged on further against Michael and Gabriel and the heavenly powers with most horrible speeches, etc.’

He became very penitent and acknowledged that he had offended God, and said that surely it was of the devil, for he did not remember his words: but he is sure that they were not decent, and beseeched God to forgive him: and so did I, and was very glad of his reforming

himself.

There was a terrible storm of thunder, hail and rain towards the end of yesterday's action, which I said was more than natural, Dee noted in the margin.

14

The next day, Wednesday, June 27, they were told, 'Immediately after your being with Caesar the whole world will be in sudden alteration. Battles and bloodshed in great number. The kings of the earth shall run to the hills and say cover us. When you hear the people say, Lo, there is a man-child that does great marvels who is even at the threshold of the door, then shall you see the calamity of the earth.'

Antichrist, Dee noted in the margin.

Caesar was the term regularly used for the Holy Roman Emperor.

'But let Laski, the servant of God, do as he is commanded. And whatsoever goodness he craves shall follow him for the lord has spared him among the kings of the earth. Let him provide for this one journey, he shall not need to provide for the rest. For he that has all has provided for him. The fifteenth day of September, that shall be twelve months, shall you set up the sign of the cross even in the middle of Constantinople.'

And then Dee was told the uses of the book he was to write.

'You have three names of God out of the line of the Holy Ghost in the principal cross of the first angle, so you have three in the second, etc. Four days after your book is made you must call upon those names of God, or on the God of hosts in those names. And fourteen days after you shall in this, or in some convenient place, call the angels by petition and by the names of God unto which they are obedient. The fifteen days you shall clothe yourselves in vestures made of linen, white; and so have apparition, use and practice of the creatures. For it is not a labour of years, nor many days.'

'This is somewhat like the old fashion of magic,' Kelly said.

'No, they all played at this,' said Ave. 'You must never use the garment after, but that once only, nor the book.'

'To what end is the book made then if it is not to be used after?' Kelly asked.

'It is made to be used for that day only,' said Dee.

'What else do you wish?' Ave asked.

'As concerning the great multitude that Kelly saw in the vision standing after the sixteen angels next to the gate, you made no mention in your description of the vision. Therefore I would know what they are.'

‘They are ministers and servants,’ said Ave. ‘There shall you see your old Sondenna and many other wicked ones that you have dealt with. Hereby shall you judge truly of wicked magic.’

Sondenna is also known as Sendenna, Kelly said. Ashmole transcribes the names as Soudenna or Seudenna. After the action Kelly told Dee about him.

‘Seeing his name is come to be known, and not by me, for I had received the sacrament with Mr Myniver, of whom I had him, never to betray or disclose his name, I will tell you something of him. He appears in many forms, till at length he appears in a triangle of fire, and being constrained to the circle he takes form, as it were, of a great giant, and will declare before for a month to come which spirits do orderly range; which being called by name will do their offices, with a few other circumstances used, etc. This indeed was one of whom I made most account, etc.’

Ed Kelly; a perfect magician, Dee wrote in the margin.

15

‘Even as the adder leads out her young ones, the first day one foot, out of her hole, not because they should eat but because they might acquaint themselves with the air and her subtlety, the second day one yard and more, she encompasses her hole and winds to and fro and teaches them to creep, and so five or six days till they know how to move and stir their bodies. After the seventh day she leads them further and feigns deceit, striking the ground with her tail, as though it were the sound of someone at hand, and then gaping, begins to hiss and stirs up fear in her young ones so that they enter into her mouth. And thus she does till they be twelve or thirteen days old. Then she leads them a stone’s cast and exercises them both with fear and hiding themselves. And when they sleep being young and wearied with labour she steals from them and makes a noise amongst the leaves and small stones with the moving of her hinder parts to the intent she might see what shift her worms can make, which stirred up with fear and missing their mother so learn to couch themselves in the chimneys of the earth, at length, after silence, the mother thrusts out herself and doubles her tongue with the sound by which she used to call them. They come together and rejoice, wreathing themselves diversely about her body for joy. She for a recompense suffers them to hang upon her back and so walters to her hole, where she gathers the leaves of the earth; and after she has chewed them small and tender with her teeth and mingled them with the dust she spews them out again and begins to lick them by little and little as though she hungered which she subtly does that her worms might eat and forget their hungriness. Finally in twenty days they become big and as skilful in the

property of their kind. She, I say, leads them out into a fertile place and full of dew and full of bushes and places apt to cover them where they feed, dwell, observe their craft and at last forsake their mother. Even so it is with you: so the lord, the true serpent and worm, leads you out from day to day according to your strength, and as you grow to the intent you might at last be brought to the pleasant dew and food of his mercy, which is triumphing true wisdom. But this the lord fears of you: that, as the worms did, so you will forsake your mother.'

And Kelly still refused to believe.

'I always told you I do not believe them nor can believe them nor will desire to believe them,' he said.

'Oh lord,' said Dee, 'shall we continue in this wavering or stiff-necked wilful blindness, and frowardly keep out your mercies and graces by our fleshly sense and unreasonable persuasion against the verity of your true ministers?'

But when the lord was compared to an adder, wasn't Kelly right not to believe? When the nature of the lord was compared to the nature of the serpent, wasn't he wise to suspect?

16

Saturday, July 14.

Rowland, Dee's eighteen month old son (born 28 January 1583 o.s.) was extremely sick about noon and by one o'clock was ready to give up the ghost, or rather lay for dead and his eyes set and sunk into his head, Dee records.

I made a vow, if the lord did foresee him to be his true servant and so would grant him life and confirm him his health at this danger and from this danger, I would during my life eat but one meal on Saturdays.

Wednesday night, July 18, as I walked alone about nine o'clock in the evening, in the chamber before my study, above in various places of that chamber appeared flashes of fire, and did not lighten abroad.

17

July 23, 1584.

Dee tried to explain his difficulties in getting the book of Enoch silvered, 'how hardly I can get it performed to my contentment.'

A man all black, naked all over, appeared and accused Dee of breaking the commandment of God. Dee denied it.

'Oh lord, my first charge was in these words,' said Dee, 'you shall go from here with him

to the Emperor. It was also said that he should make provision for this one voyage, and for the rest God had provided. So that seeing I was to go with him and he has not yet provided doing what he can, what shall I say or do?’

‘You do the commandment of princes and lords and masters, but when the God of justice, without your desert, entertains you and places you and dwells amongst you, who is able to give you all things, commands you to go and that for your own profit, you think it nothing to offend him ...’

‘Oh lord, be merciful to me,’ said Dee. ‘I could not do your commandment in going without Laski, and I was not able to cause him to go without provision. And to our judgement he seems marvellously to be careful to make provision, but still he has hindrance.’

‘The lord forgives you. But from henceforth commands you that you do not open to Laski the secrets and the judgements which the lord shall open to you of the times to come.’

‘I pray you say something to us concerning this book to be silvered, else what shall I do if I do not have direction in this, the case being so hard?’

‘As concerning the book, when you are at the end of your journey it shall be told.’

18

Thursday, July 31, the naked black man appeared again.

‘Were you not commanded to go after ten days?’

‘It is true,’ said Dee.

They had been told on 5 July ‘You have but ten days to tarry, if you will follow my counsel. But if you linger any longer, you may drink of a cup that you would not.’

‘And what follows?’ the black man asked.

‘I appeal to the mercy of the highest for I have not offended from wilfulness.’

‘Say what follows.’

‘It follows that we may drink of a cup which we would not. And also we were willed to provide for this journey, and this provision only now is made for us two, and not yet for Laski himself.’

‘Thus says the lord, I have stretched out my hand and you have hindered me. I have brought things to their course but you have thrust yourselves between. I have opened my wings but you have refused my cover. I have brought in madness into the house of the unjust but you have prevented my judgement.’

Dee made a marginal note: madness procured in the king and he is now recovered.

‘Therefore shall you drink of a cup that you would not, but it shall not fall in these days but

in the days to come. Moreover, if you go, it is; if you do not go, it also shall be.'

'Make that dark speech plain,' Dee requested. 'We were willed to go but with this condition, that Laski should make provision.'

'I have not sealed this sin to you but yet I have measured out a plague and it shall light upon you all. But to Laski I have sealed it and it shall be heavy.'

'Does Laski not use all the means he can for making provision?' Kelly asked.

'The time shall come when I am and will appear to you in a vision and of seven rods you shall choose one, to you both I speak, for I will not let my dishonour pass unpunished nor will I sell my name like a hireling.'

19

At three o'clock the following afternoon, Wednesday, August 1, Dee, Kelly, Kelly's brother Thomas, and Edmond Hilton set off for Prague by coach. They left Kelly's wife and Dee's wife and children and the other servants behind in Kraków. The journey took eight days. Their spiritual schoolmasters had been telling them to have everything completed by August. So, despite all the rebukes and warnings, they had managed at last to do what they were told to do, even though it meant going without Laski.

EIGHT : REFORMING RUDOLF

1

They arrived in Prague on Thursday, August 9, 1584, and found accommodation in Dr Hájek's house by Bethlehem in old Prague. Hájek had corresponded with Dee in the past; he had written to him in 1563 describing a wonderful cure for wounds. They may indeed have met on Dee's earlier visit to central Europe that same year when the previous Emperor, Maximilian, was crowned King of Hungary at Bratislava (Pressburg, to give it its German name). Tadeáš Hájek was 59. An imperial physician with a central position at the Emperor's court, his interests were as wide-ranging as Dee's. He corresponded with the religious reformers Melanchthon, Palaeologus and Dudith. He was involved in most of the major astronomical and medical debates of the day. He wrote a treatise, *Dialexis*, on the new star of 1572, and was widely consulted about the comet of 1577, both interests of Dee's. He wrote a popular book on the astrological principles of physiognomy. He translated the Latin *Herbal* of his colleague Matthioli, and he wrote a treatise on brewing.

Brewing was one activity for which Prague was well known. The other was alchemy, and Hájek was senior alchemical adviser to the Emperor Rudolf II. Hájek's house was used for alchemical work, and his son Simon participated in the experiments. Simon and his two brothers had studied in England, and Hájek was a friend of Dee's former student in alchemy, Philip Sidney, who had sponsored Hájek's son Johannes at Christ Church, Oxford, and who had visited Prague in 1577. Hájek's house proclaimed its alchemical associations. The study seemed in times past, anno 1518, wrote Dee, to have been the study of some student skilful of the holy stone. A name was in various places of the study noted in letters of gold and silver, Simon Baccalaureus Pragensis, and among manifold other things written very fairly in the study, and very many hieroglyphical philosophical notes, in birds, fishes, flowers, fruits, leaves and six vessels as for the philosopher's works, these verses were over the door in Latin: 'Immortal honour and like glory are owed to him by whose genius this wall is adorned with colour.' Alchemical enigmas were inscribed around the walls.

'If a white woman is married to a red husband, they embrace and conceive. They dissolve of themselves, they sooner or later are perfected of themselves. So that those which were two become one in body. There are two primary substances, sun and moon. You will see the stone too is made from these things.'

The inscription continued with further arcana, and concluded: 'This art is precious, short, light and rare. Our art is play for the boy, the labour of women. Know all you sons of this art

that no one can gather the fruit of our elixir except through the entry of our elemental stone; if he seeks another path he will never enter or attain the way.'

2

A week later Dee and Kelly resumed their actions in Dr Hájek's house. Madini warned them 'many are the woes of the world and great are the sorrows that are to come.' She listed them.

'Woe be unto women great with child for they shall bring forth monsters.

'Woe be unto the kings of the earth, for they shall be beaten in a mortar.

'Woe be unto such as paint themselves and are like the prince of pride, for they shall drink the blood of their neighbours and of their own children.

'Woe be unto the false preachers, yea seven woes be unto them, for they are the teeth of the beast.

'Woe be unto the virgins of the earth, for they shall disdain their virginity and they shall become concubines for Satan and despise the God of righteousness.

'Woe be unto the merchants of the earth, for they are become abominable. Behold they are become the spies of the earth and the dainty meat of kings. But they are foolish; yea, they shall fall into the pit that they have dug for others.

'Woe unto the books of the earth for they are corrupted and are become a wrasting stock, and firebrand to the conscience.'

Then she told Dee, 'The king of darkness whets his teeth against you and ramps with great rage to overwhelm the world upon you. And he seeks the destruction of your household and thereby your overthrow, the life of your children, yea he tempts your wife with despair and to be violent to herself.'

'Why with despair?' asked Dee.

What could make her despair, left in Kraków with the children?

Madini did not deign to reply.

She continued, 'But his lips are sealed and his claws made dull, that when he would bite he cannot, and where he scratches you the blood does not flow. But hear what your friend says to you.

'Your wife, your children, your servants and more than that, such as favour you, even the coverings of your house, are under the protection and defence of such as are of power, against whom neither the rage of such as reign nor the fury of authority, though it has the help of Satan, can prevail.

‘Laski I look for but I do not see. Behold, I wrast my eyes after him and cannot find him. Perhaps he has hid himself behind some mountain or is crept into a cave, for he does not appear.’

‘What is the cause of that?’ asked Dee. ‘Is he not gone from Kraków?’

‘Sin is the greatest mountain,’ said Madini, ‘and he rejoices when he pleases himself. And in the fury of his flesh creeps in a cave from us. I look for him and cannot see him, yet see all the world over. It is a sign that God is not with him.’

‘Has he not gone from Kraków yet?’

‘I tell you I do not see him. I can say nothing of him.’

‘Lord, our coming here was to come with him,’ said Dee.

‘Therefore I brought you here so you should not tarry with him. Your wife and children and the rest of your household must also be moved here.’

‘When?’ asked Dee.

‘Let that be my charge to answer you,’ she said.

Then a little fire appeared. Madini fell down prostrate. When she rose again the fire entered into her mouth, she grew taller than she was, and now she had three faces.

‘Now it is the virtue of the trinity represented in her,’ said Dee.

‘I hear a marvellous noise, like many mountains falling,’ said Kelly, ‘and which of the mouths speaks I cannot discern.’

‘And I have a few things to say, and I say,’ said Madini. ‘First, you shall write to Rudolf, as I shall inspire you. Then you shall go to him saying that the angel of the lord has appeared to you and rebukes him for his sins.’

The great noise continued.

‘I never heard such a noise,’ said Kelly, ‘it is as if half the world were rushing down a hill.’

‘If he hears you, then say to him, he shall triumph, do not fear. If he does not hear you, say that the lord, the God that made heaven and earth, under which he breathes and has his spirit, puts his foot against his breast and will throw him headlong from his seat. Lo this, I swear to you, I will do. If he forsakes his wickedness and turns to me his seat shall be the greatest that ever was, and the devil shall become his prisoner.’

Great flashes of fire came out of Madini and out of the stone, and suddenly she returned to her former shape.

‘Enquire no more now, but cease. For this is the marvellous beginning of this last time.’

The following day Dee once again asked about the book to be prepared for the angelical writing. And because Mapsama had dealt with that originally, he asked for Mapsama to advise him. But it was Madini who appeared.

‘When seed time is past, who sows his corn? Or what is he among men who calls back the sun a minute? So may it be said of you who were slack in sowing and therefore have let pass the benefit of time in which your seed might have multiplied. But to the intent that the heavens may agree, I say to you that you must prepare a book of fair and decent paper, to the intent that the paper itself may bear witness against you, and receive that which should have been printed in gold.’

‘God knows, and the heavens, that I did the best I could to have had the book silvered,’ said Dee.

‘It is so,’ said Madini. ‘I will bear witness with you. But where the watchmen sleep and do not do their duty theft takes place, and the enemies make havoc. The sins of Laski are not a few. Lepers and defiled people do not carve at a king’s table. For when his carvers become lepers they are not, because they are expelled. Even so into my chambers and secret judgements do not enter the incredulous, proud and scornful sinners. But because he became worse than a leper, I banished him out of my chambers, for I am more than a king. Notwithstanding, because I have sworn to you for him I will suffer him to be exalted. But in the midst of his triumph he shall fall as a proud tree does whose roots are uncertain. And because you have believed me and have not murmured against me, I will be just with you, and your abode will be with this emperor. And through your mouth shall spring a cedar tree whose top shall touch the moon and branches cover the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and a part of the seas ...

‘As concerning the letter to be written to Rudolf, oh lord,’ Dee asked, ‘I would gladly know the argument and when I should send it.’

‘Incipienti, dabitur,’ said a voice.

‘I understand this thus,’ said Dee, ‘that when I begin to write, it shall be inspired from God as was said before.’

Dee wrote to Rudolf straight away, Friday, August 17. The letter was in Latin.

‘To the serene and potent Prince and Lord, Rudolf by the grace of God Emperor of the Romans ever august, and of Germany, Hungary, Bohemia, etc., King, Archduke of Austria,

Duke of Burgundy, Styria, Carinthia, etc, Knight of the Tyrol, etc.

‘Most happy of all Christian princes, oh Rudolf, so unknown to men is the providence of our omnipotent creator, which disposes and perfects all things, that planned series and co-ordination of things from first to last that by most men are rashly judged to come out in this or that way by fortune or by chance ... without doubt this is almost incredible which now seems to be pressing between your sacred Caesarean Majesty and the most humble in God me, your slave, from multiple occasions preceding on both sides, in one combination and divine unanimity, this same something at which to marvel.

‘When I was young, I enjoyed the company of two illustrious emperors: the most victorious Charles V, and his brother Ferdinand, the magnificent grandfather of your Caesarean Majesty. The latter at Pressburg in Hungary, the former at Brussels in Brabant. The latter, 1563; the former, 1549. And I began to take a particular delight in the most clement Emperor Maximilian, the father of your Caesarean Majesty, worthy of immortal glory, at that time crowned king against the opposition of the Turkish tyrant himself, in that same Pressburg in that same year, ’63. I strove faithfully to do justice to his very rare virtues and I tried in a certain hieroglyphic work (theorem 20 of the *Monas Hieroglyphica*, a small book published more than 20 years ago) to render them to posterity as most worthy of commendation. In the protracted performance of this work, my mind had a presentiment of the House of Austria; that there was eventually to be someone in whom my greatest hope would be fulfilled, and in whom, for the benefit of the Christian polity, the best and greatest thing would, or might, become actual. Therefore to your Caesarean Majesty, the fourth of the Roman emperors from the noble family of Austrian princes who were flourishing in my lifetime, here am I, also the fourth letter of each of the three alphabets. And I am present in such a way as I present myself at the feet of your Caesarean Majesty abjectly to kiss them, extremely happy if in anything I shall be able to be pleasing and useful to so great an Emperor of a Christian republic.’

Something very necessary to the Emperor could be communicated to him in private and done by him, Dee wrote in conclusion, if secrecy were assured.

5

‘Open to Rudolf the manner of God’s visitation,’ they were told. ‘Show unto him the holy vision. For I will make you unto him a hand, an arm, yea a half body.’

Then after the usual rebuke for their delays, on Tuesday, August 21, Uriel came and told them the dates of their deaths.

‘Dee, your age and continuance in this world, in flesh, according to the finger and second

proportion which you call nature, is seventy-three years and a half, and here it is.'

He pointed to a book held out to him by another figure. A figure like a shadow opened the book and it seemed, said Kelly, to be of iron or steel. In the book appeared various names such as Bamasan, Corsax, Tohomaphala, etc.

'You do more than you are commanded,' Uriel told Kelly for reading the names. 'Cease for a while.'

He spread a thing like a cloud before them. But then he reappeared with the other figure and Sudsamna appeared in the book and against it, 46.

Sudsamna was Kelly's good angel, Dee noted in the margin.

'So much shall you live by nature and die violently,' Uriel told Kelly, vanishing again.

But he reappeared with the book and Aflafben written in it and 73 with a prick over the upper part of the figure 3. Aflafben was Dee's good angel. The book was very big and full of names and numbers against them. The leaves were very thin. Then Uriel opened the book by himself. Against Aflafben appeared 122 and against Sudsamna 87.

'Beyond which you cannot,' said Uriel. 'Notwithstanding this life is always given by God or at the intercession of some one or more of us his angels. The other is natural, notwithstanding it is shortened through the sin of man. I am a witness to myself that these books and words are true.'

'Behold my brethren,' Uriel continued, 'God is ready to open his merciful storehouses and gates of understanding to you. But he that lives for himself and for the end of this shadow limits his wisdom with this number, and shall both have an end at once. But he that turns to the wall and weeps bitterly shall enter into this book. But he must not build his own house but a house for the lord.'

'Behold this his pen is a pen of steel, but that which I raze with is of gold and a piercing instrument. If therefore your visitation shall be after tomorrow and you covet to build, because you are men, then give your names to the iron. But if you will remember the lord and add anything to his building faithfully, then vow your names to me in the name of him who created you. After this time there is no choice. Therefore, consider. For never before but once was this mystery and mercy of God opened to man.'

'Thy will be done,' said Dee, 'not as we will, nor as we have rashly and blindly chosen before. But this is our choice, to be your servants all the days of our life. And we desire not long life so much as the favour which adds those days in which our faith may be fruitful through your graces abounding in us. I renounce my former choice, I challenge no promise, but require you, oh God, of your fatherly goodness to be my light, director, staff, strength, defence

and comfort, now and ever, Amen.’

‘He has written after the numbers in his own book, 122, 87, est, est,’ said Kelly.

‘Now deal with Rudolf and be not slack,’ said Uriel, ‘for until you have talked with him I appear no more. Your haste shall prevent the slander of tongues, whom Satan has already stirred up against you.’

‘I understand of none,’ said Dee.

‘It is best you understand it not at all,’ said Uriel.

Uriel disappeared. Dee asked if Madini would tell him when his wife and children were to be sent for, but no answer was given.

At the end of the day’s action, however, he received letters from his wife that she and her children were well. God have the praise and thanks therefore, he wrote.

Although the precise dates are uncertain, it is believed that Dee died in his early eighties, and Kelly in his early forties.

6

Friday, August 24, 1584, St. Bartholomew’s Day, Dee decided to write and ask the Spanish ambassador to present his letter to the Emperor. When Philip Sidney visited Prague seven years earlier he had found Rudolf, then aged twenty-five, ‘few of words, sullen of disposition, very secret and resolute’ and ‘extremely Spaniolated.’ Since Rudolf had been brought up in the Spanish court from 1563 to 1571 this latter was not surprising. He dressed in the Spanish fashion, spoke Spanish formally for preference, and placed great trust in advisers with close Spanish connections. Dee must have decided it was strategic to approach Rudolf through the Spanish ambassador. Again he wrote in Latin.

To the illustrious Lord, Lord Don Guillén de San Clemente, prefect of Affairs of the most serene and Catholic King of Spain before his sacred Caesarean Majesty, and My Lord, deserving of all my Respect.

The condition of men on earth is such, most noble sir, that no one seems to be born for himself alone. No man received the necessities of life as either all of them produced spontaneously, or as offered voluntarily by others. Thence there emerged mutual societies, mutual friendships, mutual works, mutual gifts, the exchange of things in the world, and contracts in the buying and selling of things. There exist other diverse states of men whereby men among themselves and with men take charge of multiple duties and commerces. Now in all these it is not solely utility or perishable pleasure that is the scope or end that they strive or study to attain. But something other is proposed in some people which is in some sort divine

and which we many call virtue and honour. So this, sent down from heaven, informs and adorns the minds of men and makes itself at home there, such that it restores them, worthy, to the heavenly abode. That, that, therefore, illustrious sir, is what made your excellency yesterday so attentive, benign and infinitely kind to me. That it is which will significantly excite again your memory and your mind in both proposing my cause to his Caesarean Majesty in commending it, and likewise handling it in that manner in which those secret things are handled which are beheld by the few and understood by fewer, true and intrinsically useful though they may be. The sooner his Caesarean Majesty shall have embraced this marvellous and mighty providence and generous gift of God, the sooner and more abundantly shall the sincerity, goodness and usefulness of my mission be proved. I could have wished to bring this enclosed small book and your excellency's enclosed letter in person. But, with pardon may it be said, because of a hurt to the skin of a toe I cannot conveniently come on foot. Hence I have imposed this burden on my friend, that he present all my services to you and deliver the trifling gift that it is for his Caesarean Majesty.

Emeric Sontag, Laski's servant, delivered the letter to San Clemente.

7

Dee had now heard from Dr Hájek's son Simon that Sir Henry Sidney was in fact still alive. Monday, August 27, he tried to clarify some points.

'First, what was the cause of the error recorded 18 February this year, 1584, at Laško, of Sir Henry Sidney's death?

'Secondly, in what sense is this to be understood which Madini willed me to say to Rudolf, "An angel of the lord has appeared to me"?

'Thirdly, Madini said as concerning the time of my wife and children and household to be moved here, "Let that be my charge to answer you."

'Fourthly, Madini willed me to write to Rudolf, and I have done and caused it to be delivered to Don Guillén de San Clemente, the Spanish Ambassador, to deliver it to the Emperor. God prosper it. Amen.'

Madini appeared.

'Even as man's finger touching, moving or forcing a musical instrument is the cause without which it cannot sound or drink up the air which again seeking issue and feeling a stay is the cause of concord or dissonancy, according to the inward spirit and imagination of the thing that moves or of the finger moving, so the earthly part of man which has no motion of itself moves by spiritual touch or finger and sends out sounds not according to herself but

according to the fiery, invincible and spiritual power by which it is moved. By this we learn that man's body and his organical motions have three manners of movers: centrally by the property and perfection of the soul; from above and by descent from the angels or participants of understanding; and contrary by ascending wicked spirits and tempters, all moving.

‘But here you must note that as the sun deprives the moon which is to give light in respect of her end but not of herself, so do the angels and higher powers drown and overshadow the soul in man when they are present, working from God and in themselves as from above, and not by the soul as any root or first cause of the motion.

‘But when the devil enters and ascends he works not by force but by enticement and so allures the soul to grant his possession, by which he enters and becomes strong.

‘Those that have ears let them hear, for my words are wisdom and the grounds of many science.

‘By which you may perceive that man greatly needs to pray against temptation.’

They read over the message and considered it, and then Madini returned.

‘But to the answer, the end of my purpose. Satan, perceiving you’ – she addressed Kelly – ‘as well to be moved by him because of your own grant as by the motion by which you were moved and illuminated; and, being the father of subtlety and a froward understanding, purposed, even in this one sentence, yes, with this one lie, to overturn, or at least to blemish, the worthiness of our message and of your receiving, because he saw the course of nature and the doing of man; and that this man Mr Simon Hájek, young Hájek, would first visit you’ – she addressed Dee – ‘therefore he thrust in a shingle of his own cutting and nature. Not to the intent that it should be credited but to the intent it should be a stumbling block to the action in time to come, which is now.

‘My brethren, he is a marvellous workman, and one who strikes the most strings, in a manner, all. But he has his reward. Therefore I deny it was spoken by me or of me.’

Dee noted in the margin, Satan about this time was very busy with E. K. and declared his name to be Satan at Laško.

There were probably other errors too, Dee realised.

‘So by God's grace I can conceive of many other things beside that,’ he said to Madini. ‘I have occasion of reforming the records that the heavens may agree, as the phrase was used.’

‘There are not many,’ said Madini. ‘But such as there are, gather them together, let me sift them.’

That same day at noon Dee received letters from his wife and from her brother Nicholas Fromond in England telling ‘how Mr Gilbert, Mr Sled, Mr Andreas Fremonsheim my bookseller, used me very ill.’

On the journey at Lübeck the previous November Kelly had delivered a spiritual message that Fromond had been gaoled and Dee’s library raided. The information had come in a session that Dee suspected was the work of illuders. But now, nine months later, he received confirmation.

Is it likely that if the raid had taken place by November no one would have written to Dee before the following August? Is Kelly’s spiritual information most satisfactorily taken as a prevision? That the spirit in question seems not to have been a divine one is not necessarily a problem; evil spirits could readily impart true information; the problem was that they habitually intermingled it with disinformation. Another possibility is that Kelly had prior knowledge that a raid was going to take place. He had anyway already back in July the previous year delivered the spiritual warning to Dee that his home would be searched. Did he have other sources of information? Or did he need anything other than a realistic paranoia?

Certainly, at some point, or points, the Mortlake house was raided. When Dee returned to England in 1589 he annotated one of the manuscript catalogues of his library. About seventy titles are marked with the phrase ‘John Davis spoil.’ Davis was the seaman, explorer and pirate about whom spirit had earlier refused to comment. Adrian Gilbert seems also to have been involved in the plundering. He was one of the first to visit upon Dee’s return.

‘Mr Adrian Gilbert came to me to Mortlake, and offered me as much as I could require at his hands, both for my goods carried away, and for the mines.’ What Charles Sled did is unknown, but as a Walsingham agent his presence is suggestive of secret service activity in the raid. Another Catholic recusant, an agent of Lord Burghley’s who may well like Sled have been involved in informing on other Catholics, acquired a large number of Dee’s books. He was Nicholas Saunde, and his name is written in numerous surviving titles from Dee’s library, sometimes over Dee’s signature, sometimes on pages from which Dee’s signature has been bleached out. Whether he personally stole the books or received them from someone else is unclear.

Andreas Fremonsheim was the London agent for Birkmanns, the Cologne booksellers, who had catalogued the library. Dee owed Fremonsheim sixty three pounds, thirteen shillings and eight pence farthing at the time of his departure. It was a substantial sum. Kelly’s annual salary from Dee was originally £40, later raised to £50. Dee had committed all his goods to

Fromond with the intention that Fromond should discharge the debt, but Fromond refused to pay. Dee was still being pressed for payment of sixty three pounds fourteen shillings and eight pence in 1595. This suggests that whatever Fremonsheim's involvement in the raid, he had not simply repossessed the books not paid for.

As for the claim that Fromond had been clapped in gaol, there is no evidence as to whether this did, or did not, occur. Nor is there any evidence to confirm the prediction 'that your house may be burned for a remembrance' ever occurred.

9

In the *Compendious Rehearsal* of his life, Dee itemised the losses.

'First the loss of all my household stuff left here and committed to Nicholas Fromond's safe custody for me till my return or sending to him, intended to be within one year and eight months. But he unduly sold it immediately upon my departure, or caused it to be carried away.'

Dee estimated the value was over one hundred pounds. His assertion here that this sale or plunder took place immediately upon his departure, suggests that the information delivered at Lübeck may have referred to what had already happened, rather than what was yet to happen; alternatively the loss of the books may have been a separate event from the loss of the household stuff.

'The loss of books from my library, still missing and not restored according to the order, taken by the four commissioners assigned by the right honourable privy council therein (whereupon there is a thousand marks forfeited unto me of a debtor insufficient to pay), the books being above five hundred. I mean of such as may be gotten for money and so their value known; for some wanting are not to be gotten for money at any mart or in any stationers' shop, they being very rare and excellent good books; the value of this loss is evident to be above one hundred and fifty pounds.

'The loss and spoil of my laboratory furniture – equipment, vessels and materials – one hundred pounds.

'The loss of my mathematical instruments; as of the quadrant of five foot semi-diameter, the pair of Gerard Mercator's best globes, (on which Dee had recorded his observations of various comets) the theoric of the eighth sphere, and the astronomer's staff – thirty pounds.

'The water clock so truly showing not only the minutes but also the seconds of an hour, the excellent magnes-stone and various sea compasses and geographical charts – ten pounds.'

The total sum amounted to three hundred and ninety pounds.

Other things could not be valued. Dee's collection of ancient deeds relating to Ireland and

Wales – evidence how some of these lands came to the Lacys, the Mortimers, the Burghes and the Clares – was ‘now by undue means embezzled away every one of them.’ So was his box of ancient seals of arms. In the past these had been consulted by Queen Elizabeth’s heralds, by the clerks of the records at the Tower of London, and by antiquaries, who had ‘sat whole days at my house in Mortlake in gathering rarities to their liking out of them.’ Now they were lost.

The story that the house at Mortlake was raided by a mob that accused Dee of witchcraft has no contemporary substantiation. Nor is there any substantiation for the story that the library was burned. Dee never mentions either of these claims. The spirit message was simply that ‘it may be’ burned. As for the search for secret things that the message alleged, again there is no confirmation. But with Walsingham’s agent Charles Sled on the scene it would seem likely.

Some of the items removed were later sold. The magnet, Dee complained, ‘was sold out of the library for but five shillings and for it afterwards (divided piecemeal) more than twenty pounds was given.’

Other items seem wantonly to have been destroyed. There was a quadrant made by Richard Chancellor on which Dee and Chancellor had made observations of the sun’s height at the meridian thirty years earlier. ‘Now I find it most barbarously spoiled and smit in pieces with hammers.’

Were the removals to raise money for unpaid debts? Or were they opportunistic thefts while Dee was away? Or beneath the cover of one or both of these possibilities, was there a government search for ‘secrets’? Did the damage occur in the course of the plundering? Or in the course of the search? Or was it deliberate destruction, the harassment of someone suspected to be unsound? There is no reason to rule out any of these explanations; all are possible, all may be true, or a part of the truth.

Elias Ashmole commented some seventy years later that there was a warning in this episode for all intellectuals. ‘A caveat for all ingenious and eminent philosophers to be more wise than to keep any dear or excellent books in their own houses. And ’tis most probable that at this time his *Speculum Unitatis* might fall into some hands that would never since suffer it to see light.’ And still to this day Dee’s *Speculum Unitatis* remains lost.

The news about the raid was shattering information. All the more so since there was nothing Dee could do from a distance, nor could he even ascertain exactly what had been removed, stolen or destroyed.

the Spanish Ambassador that he had delivered Dee's letters and book to the Emperor that day. And that he took them graciously and thankfully and said that within three or four days he would let the Spanish Ambassador understand when he would give me audience.'

11

Saturday, September 1, 10 a.m.

As I and E. K. sat in my little study after our talk of various matters and of my expecting audience at the Emperor's hand, etc., Dee records, E. K. saw three little creatures walk up and down in the sunshine about a handful from the pavement, and the creatures themselves very small, not a handful long, like little shadows or smokes, and the path where they walked seemed yellow. They walked a good while to and fro till at length I suspected that they were sent to us, and so prepared the show stone. But E. K. said he had rather see them thus out of the stone. I said that in the stone we have warrant that no wicked thing shall enter, but outside the stone illuders might deal with us unless God prevented it, etc. E. K. said again he had rather deal thus.

'His meaning is above your sight,' said one of the creatures, the one in the middle. The other two knelt down in the sunbeams.

'God has sent us to do his will, both in that he will turn his heart and in that he vouchsafes to make you witnesses of his secret purposes and determinations in hand.'

Rudolf's heart is to be turned by God, noted Dee, but I do not know the meaning.

'For thus says the lord of hosts, if he dream and will not hear me, gather up what he has and that which should be given him, that his life may be short and his house without comfort, that he may pass away nakedly as a shadow.

'We are they that must direct your practices. Behold, let us give testimony of our names. My name is Ga. My name is Za. My name is Vaa. So we are called by position. You shall find us amongst the merciful tables delivered to Enoch and so to you.'

The three names make one name of seven letters, Gazavaa, Dee noted.

He asked, 'Shall I use any other means to be heard by the Emperor than I have done?'

'Follow that which is commanded you,' he was told.

12

Sunday, September 2, Kelly got drunk and did not turn up until the following morning. Dee recorded the events in the spiritual transactions.

There was a great disquietness in E. K. being come home from our host's house where he

had lain all night upon a form, by reason he had been suddenly overcome with wine, which he never was like that before, he said. Yet intending with himself to take heed of being overshot in drinking wine, being requested by the hostess to give her a quart of wine upon the good bargain he had in a clock he bought from her for five ducats.

In this drinking company was Alexander, Lord Laski's servant, who came with us to Prague, to whom E. K., when the drink on the sudden had overcome him, said he would cut off his head, and with his walking staff touched him fair and softly on the neck, sitting in front of him.

This Alexander being half drunk himself by and by took these words in great snuff and went to defend himself and so took his weapon to him and thereupon they caused Alexander to go down.

It was supper time and that night I refrained from eating, and so waiting at my lodging and looking out saw Alexander sitting on the great stone outside our lodging. I called to him and told him that they were at supper. He came over to me and he had wept much. He complained of Kelly's former words and the touch of the staff, how it was against his credit to take that in good part, and spoke many soldiers' terms of stout words, not worthy of recording.

I thereupon went to our host's house to find out the truth and there I found E. K. fast asleep on a form, most soundly, for which I was right sorry. And yet better pleased to perceive the words of E. K. which so moved Alexander, being half drunk, to have been spoken by E. K. when wine and not wit bore rule. And so I pleaded a long time with Alexander that of words spoken so as they were, no such exact account was to be given to him; and after two hours persuasion caused Alexander to go to bed in our lodging where he used to lie, for he would have gone out to our former inn in those raging half drunken pangs he was in, which I thought was not good.

This Monday morning E. K. coming home and seeing Alexander as he came in, said, 'They say I spoke words which greatly offended you last night, and that I touched you with my staff, etc. I know nothing of it,' and shook hands with Alexander in friendly fashion.

'Well,' said Alexander, 'si fuisset alius, etc.'

E. K. came up to me. I told him how sorry I was for this mischance and told him of the watchman perceiving Alexander's disquiet mind and hearing his words, they came to me and charged me to have a care of the peace-keeping, as they did indeed. And further said that Alexander in his rage said that rather, or before he should cut off his head, that he would cut E. K. in pieces.

As soon as I had expressed that word of this drunken Alexander, whom now I saw quiet

and E. K. also quiet, suddenly E. K. fell into such a rage that he would be revenged on him for so saying and for railing on him in the street as he did, etc.

Much ado I, Emeric and his brother had to stop or hold him from going to Alexander with his weapon, etc. At length we let him go in his doublet and hose, without a cap or hat on his head, and into the street he hasted with his brother's rapier drawn and challenged Alexander to fight.

But Alexander went from him and said, 'I will not, Master Kelly, I will not.'

At this E. K. took up a stone and threw it after him as after a dog, and so came into the house again in a most furious rage that he might not fight with Alexander. The rage and fury was so great in words and gestures as might plainly prove that the wicked enemy sought either E. K.'s own destroying of himself, or of me, or his brother, etc.

This may suffice to notify the mighty temptation and vehement working of the subtle spiritual enemy Satan wherewith God suffered E. K. to be tempted and almost overcome, to my great grief, discomfort and most great discredit, if it should, as the truth was, have come to the Emperor's understanding, except he had known me well, etc.

I was in great doubt how God would take this offence and devised with myself how I might with honesty be cleared from the shame and danger that might arise if these two should fight, etc. At the least it would cross all good hope here with the Emperor, etc. for a time till God redressed it.

After I had brought E. K. to some quietness, by yielding much to his humour etc. and saying little, not long after came my messenger from my wife at Kraków, and Hugh my servant with him, to my great comfort through her letters, and the full satisfying of me by Hugh my servant's knowledge further than conveniently could be written. Comfort in time of need.

13

Around two that Monday afternoon Dee received a message from the Emperor.

Noble, most famous Master, Master deserving of all respect.

Caesar has just now signified to the lord legate of Spain, my master, that he should summon your mastership to him at the second hour, at which he desires to hear you. If your mastership is able to come at the said hour he will immediately inform the Lord Octavius Spinola who is from the stables and chambers of his Majesty. For the rest, I commend myself to your mastership, again and again, with the utmost sense of duty.

Most devoted to your mastership,

Arnoldus Vander Boxe.

‘More comfort in time of need,’ Dee noted.

That Octavius Spinola was ‘from the stables and chambers of his Majesty’ was no insult. Rudolf was notorious for spending more time in the stables than in government. They were, along with his art collection and his alchemical projects, the site of his private world of pleasures.

14

Dee responded immediately.

I went straight up to the castle; and in the ritter-stove or guard-chamber I stayed a little. In the mean space I sent Emeric to see what was the time; and the chamberlain, Octavius Spinola, chamberlain and stall-master in the absence of the officer who is sent into Spain, spied him out of the Emperor’s chamber window and called him, who came up to me and by that time the chamberlain had come out to me, and from Emeric he understood that I was the man the Emperor waited for.

He came to me very courteously, told me of the Emperor’s desire to see me and to speak with me. It was exactly three o’clock. So he returned to the Emperor in the privy chamber and came out again for me and led me by the skirt of the gown through the dining chamber and the privy chamber, where the Emperor sat at a table with a great chest and standish of silver before him, my *Monas* and letters by him, etc. I came towards him with due reverence of three curtsies, and he showed me a gracious and cheerful countenance.

Then I craved pardon at his Majesty’s hand for my boldness in sending his Majesty a letter and the *Monas Hieroglyphica*, dedicated to his father. But I did it of sincere and entire goodwill I bore to his father Maximilian, and also to his Majesty. And that the rather, because I had good proof of the favour which almighty God bears to his Majesty.

He then thanked me for his father’s book, and affirmed that he believed me that I was affectionate to his highness. And of my estimation with the learned of the world he had heard from the Spanish ambassador, and also of my zealous mind towards his grace. And he commended the book *Monas*, but said that it was too hard for his Majesty’s capacity; and added that the Spanish ambassador told him that I had something to say to him which was to his benefit.

I answered, ‘So I have.’

And looking back whether anyone was in the chamber or not, I found that we were alone. Hereupon I began to declare that all my lifetime I had spent in learning. But for this forty years continually, in sundry manners and in various countries, with great pain, care and cost, I had

from degree to degree sought to come by the best knowledge that man might attain to in the world. And I found at length that neither any man living nor any book I could yet find was able to teach me those truths I desired and longed for.

And therefore I concluded with myself to make intercession and prayer to the giver of wisdom and all good things to send me such wisdom that I might know the natures of his creatures, and also enjoy means to use them to his honour and glory. And in this purpose I made various attempts. And at length it pleased God to send me his light, Uriel, whereby I am assured of his merciful hearing of my long, fervent, constant and communal prayer in the cause specified before. And that his holy angels for these two and a half years have informed me, and have finished such works to be seen in my hands as no man's heart could have wished for so much. Yea, they have brought me a stone of such value that no earthly kingdom is of that worthiness as to be compared to the virtue or dignity of it. And that these things be true, I protested, and took to witness the God of heaven and earth by whose commandments I am now before your Majesty, and have a message from him to say to you, and that is this.

‘The angel of the lord has appeared to me and rebukes you for your sins. If you will hear me and believe me you shall triumph. If you will not hear me, the lord, the God that made heaven and earth, under whom you breathe and have your spirit, puts his foot against your breast and will throw you down headlong from your seat.

‘Moreover, the lord has made this covenant with me by oath that he will do and perform. If you will forsake your wickedness and turn to him your seat shall be the greatest that ever was, and the devil shall become your prisoner. Which devil, I conjectured, was the great Turk,’ I said. ‘This is my commission from God. I feign nothing, nor am I a hypocrite, an ambitious man, or doting, or dreaming in this cause. If I speak otherwise than I have just cause, I forsake my salvation,’ I said.

The Emperor said he believed me and said that he thought I loved him unfeignedly, and said that I should not need such earnest protestations, and would not willingly have had me kneel as often as I did.

‘Further,’ I said, ‘his Majesty was to see and understand nakedly from the beginning the whole course of this angelical leading, instructing and comforting me. For so I was commanded that I should from the beginning nakedly open to Rudolf that manner of God's visitation, and show to him the holy vision. And I am ready to do this with which I am charged.’

The Emperor said, at another time he would hear and understand more.

I spoke then somewhat more of the purposes before to the intent they might get some root

or stick better in his mind.

To be short, he thanked me and said he would henceforward take me to his recommendation and care. And some such words promising favour he used, which I did not hear clearly, he spoke so low.

In the end, perceiving that his will was to end for this time, I did my duty with a curtesy. And at the door going out I made a curtesy, and so came into the next chamber where the noble Octavius Spinola came to me again, and with courteous words offered me great friendship. I took my leave of him and so came through the ritter-stove or guard-chamber, and so down, and home.

I had a full hour's audience with his Majesty.

15

When Uriel next appeared, Wednesday, September 5, he wore a black thing like a sarcenet of silk before his face and over his head behind.

'By the rest of his garments it seems to be Uriel,' said Kelly.

'God makes all things white and makes us whiter than snow,' said Dee. 'What that black scarf imports I do not know, but I suspect.'

'Such as defile the seat of the soul and tire suffocated with drunkenness do not enter into the kingdom of heaven, nor can behold the ornaments of the lord's beauty,' said Uriel.

Nevertheless, he went on to prophesy.

'Those that inhabit the holy city and usurp the authority of the highest tire called in remembrance before the lord and they shall be scattered like the mighty hail that the spirits of the north have gathered against the day of revenge. They tire become proud and think there is no God. They are stiff-necked, for they tire the sons of wickedness. Lo, in the days of Rudolf shall this come to pass, of whom the lord has said, If he hear me and believe my words I will place you unto him as a mighty rock. I will open to you for his instructions and safeguard to come my determinations in hand and to come. And when he has wiped away his darkness and offence of his soul, I will appear to him to the terror of all nations.'

So Dee would achieve the intellectual's dream, adviser to an imperial ruler.

'And lo I open to you another seal, because I have said to you, I am true and just. In the year eighty-eight, you shall see the sun move contrary to his course.

'The lord has prepared his prophet and he shall descend from the heavens, as it is written by Malachiah the prophet. Behold, I will send before that day, not that day I spoke of but the great day of the lord, Elias again amongst you.

‘In the mean season I will be merciful to Rudolf and will bring into his house such as shall be skilful, to whom I will give my spirit to work gold, silver and the ornaments of his house. And he shall perceive that I bless him in that I have tied him to my garments. If he does not hear me, behold, I have one in store, yes, such a one as cleaves to justice. Man is but a reed that is shaken with every wind. The pride of kings is as the beauty of a peacock. See how they run all astray. See how they tempt the spirits of righteousness. Lo, as I have said to you, I reserve that wicked king, not that I will be merciful to him but that he shall shortly perish with an eternal scourge.

‘And now hear me what I say to you. Hereafter see you do not tempt me, nor look for my presence after this order, but for great causes. For lo, this is the end of teaching. Now comes in the time of warning and of counsel.’

‘Will you give me leave to speak?’ said Dee, endlessly loquacious, predictably anxious at this threat of their dialogues’ curtailment.

‘Say.’

‘I trust it shall not offend God at any time to call for his light in matters dark to us and above our capacity. Also in understanding and enjoying Enoch’s tables, we are to require help of instruction from Ave. And so of other points and doctrines already begun we are to require their help who have begun with us, etc.’

‘As far as the lord has suffered you to enter into his garden, even so far, I say, taste and eat.’

‘The entrance we do not have yet, but the manner to enter. The perfect practice is the best entrance.’

‘All things that are delivered to you are plain,’ said Uriel.

But Dee persisted with his need for clarification.

‘Lord, I do thus speak to be perfectly instructed in what sense your words are to be understood when you said, “This is the end of teaching.”’

‘You have called upon me and I have heard you. You have desired comfort and I have comforted you. You have the spirit of choice. Be it sufficient to you that the garden of the lord is open to you, where there is no hunger, nor thirst, but a filling spirit, a comforter.’

Beyond that Uriel would say no more.

‘Why do I speak to you who have defiled yourselves? I will take up those things that I have, and will be gone.’

While I was thus requesting God, Dee records, E. K. made a vow of penance in token of hearty sorrowfulness for his fault noted in this day’s action, never to eat his supper or evening

meal on Saturdays during his life. Wherein I beseech the highest to regard his inward intent and his continual memory of the lord's mercies in sparing him when he had most offended him.

Now both of them had vowed not to eat an evening meal on Saturdays.

As for the prophecy, they speculated about what was meant by the year 88. 1588 or which 88 else? writes Dee. For I have not yet had that I remember the year notified to be 1588 etc. Perhaps 1688. But, they decided, this prophecy is to be known anno 1588.

The spirits were not alone in giving warnings. Prophecies of doom or revelation were widespread. In 1564 Cyprian Leowitz, the Czech astrologer, had published a prognostic almanac with predictions for the years 1564 to 1584. He forecast some violent change to coincide with the new trigon which would enter the heavens in 1584. Dee's annotated copy of the almanac is now in the University Library, Cambridge; he has underlined especially those items relating to Bohemia and the Habsburgs. Dee may well have known or corresponded with Leowitz; one of his first publications was appended to Leowitz's tract on casting horoscopes published in London in 1558.

16

The morning of this Wednesday, September 5, Dee records, before I prepared myself for the former action, I sent Emeric with two letters to be delivered: the one to the Spanish ambassador, giving him thanks for his honourable dealing with the Emperor's Majesty on my behalf, and the other to the noble Octavius Spinola, thanking him likewise, and requiring his instruction or advice how I might most conveniently proceed in dealing with the Emperor's Majesty. The copy of which letter I thought good to record here that the effect thereof consequent might have the light of the original cause, divine and human annexed.

To the illustrious and mighty lord, the Lord Octavius Spinola, of the stables and chambers of his sacred, Imperial Majesty, most worthy of regard.

Illustrious and mighty lord. I am not able to pay sufficiently profound thanks for the outstanding humanity and benevolence with which you embraced me yesterday: a man indeed unknown to you but nevertheless devoted to virtue and truth and who has determined to spend the whole remaining course of my life, God so willing, in such a way that his sacred Imperial Majesty may clearly perceive how the dreadful majesty of almighty God will be almost incredibly propitious to him. And though I see that his sacred Majesty is extremely busy and occupied constantly and has not proper leisure for others' business or for the cause to be presented to him by me – he is not able and he is under no clear obligation anyway to do so –

nevertheless if any means could be thought of to suit the circumstances of place and time and subject by which his sacred Imperial Majesty might deign to learn from me things that might be pleasing to him, on this matter I would most gladly hear or receive the instruction and judgement of your illustrious magnificence. For in all this I shall be, as may appear at the appointed time, utterly sworn, devoted, and faithful to the service of almighty God and his sacred Imperial Majesty, most of all for the glorifying of the holy orthodox Catholic and apostolic church and the defence and increase of the Christian republic.

The flower of opportunity must be plucked early; it will quickly wither.

John Dee.

Emeric went and delivered my letter to the Spanish ambassador. But this he brought back again saying that the Emperor was ridden very early abroad to Brandys or elsewhere, not certainly being known, and that this noble Octavius Spinola was gone with his Majesty.

Hereupon I determined with changing the date to send to him at the Emperor his Majesty's returning to Prague.

17

Tuesday, September 11, Emeric Sontag delivered Dee's letter to Octavius Spinola, and the following day after mass went up to the castle for the response, which Dee got Emeric to write down in his own hand.

His sacred Imperial Majesty has kindly noticed the matters that Mr John Dee through his Majesty's chamberlain has caused to be proposed. To these his Majesty has graciously given his answer, that he is not at all times conversant in every respect with Latin speech; moreover his time being taken with various and complex matters, his Majesty finds it hard to set the time free for an audience, so Mr Dee should see fit to impart and entrust his affairs in association with the magnific Dr Kurz who belongs to his Majesty's privy council, a man thoroughly reliable and equipped with distinguished learning. His Majesty after approaching lord counsellor Kurz will cause this to be related to him. But if Mr John Dee will prefer otherwise he will be able at length by one means or another through the necessities of business to satisfy the request of John Dee.

Spinola had asked Emeric to bring Dee's answer up to the castle at evensong. Dee sent his thanks and appreciation, and also asked Emeric to find out how soon he should communicate with Dr Kurz. Spinola said that Dr Kurz would understand the Emperor's pleasure the next day. So the next morning Dee sent Emeric back up to the castle, to bring himself in sight of the noble Spinola, if he could, thereby to help his memory for warning and information to be given

to Dr Kurz that we might come together so soon as conveniently might be.

NINE: THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE

1

Jakob Kurz von Senftenau was one of Rudolf's closest advisers at this time. An aulic councillor, in 1587 he was to become imperial vice-chancellor, a position his father-in-law Weber had held earlier. Possessor of private gardens near the royal palace, an enthusiastic student of astronomy, he was a knowledgeable and powerful figure.

Thursday, September 13, 1584, at seven in the morning, Dee sent Emeric up to the castle, and around nine he and Kelly consulted the stone about the Emperor's delegation of Dr Kurz to see Dee, asking 'whether I shall openly and frankly deal with the doctor.'

Nothing appeared.

I suspected some of our misdoings to be the cause of the lord's refraining to answer, Dee records, and he prayed. And that I did the rather because as I felt my good angel, or other good friend, in virtue. So I felt Pilosum, sensibly, busy and as it were to terrify me with my past offences, or to put me out of hope at this present from being heard.

Kelly said that devil could not prevail against him, nor could he be accused of his late notable fault. For he had made a reckoning and sorrowful bewailing for the trespass of his to the lord, and did not doubt of forgiveness, and that he was so reconciled to God that neither Satan nor any other wicked accuser could put him in any doubt of God's mercy. Then he confessed that by reason he himself was an unmeet person to come before the Emperor or princes, etc and therefore if it would please God to discharge him of further meddling, so, by reason, he might seem well at ease, etc.

Precisely why he felt himself an unfit person is not spelled out. Was it a general social insecurity, self-doubt, modesty, caution, or was it something specific, like his recent drunkenness, or his cropped ear?

Finally Uriel appeared, still with the scarf before his face. After a disquisition on forgiveness, he turned to the topic of Rudolf.

'For what is Rudolf who is not at leisure for the lord, the God of righteousness, the king of heaven and earth? Are they troubled with things that are greater than I? True it is, for with me there is no trouble, for where I enter I set all things quiet. If he be not at leisure to hear me, have I not told you that I have another in store?'

'It is not yet done,' said Dee, 'and therefore we ask counsel of you. And I thank you, oh lord, for rebuking us before further errors are committed.'

‘I gave you the spirit of choice, and therefore I will regard your doing and will wink at your weakness,’ said Uriel. ‘And I say to you again, Rudolf has heard you, and I will pour my spirit of truth into you, and you shall be a light to him.’

‘If he live righteously and follow me truly, I will hold up his house with pillars of hyacinth and his chambers shall be full of modesty and comfort. I will bring the east wind over him as a lady of comfort, and she shall sit upon his castles with triumph and he shall sleep with joy. Moreover I will bless his loins and his house shall stand to the third generation and to the end; for now the world has hoary hairs and begins to be sick.’

‘If he despise my commandment, I will put the sword against him and in his dwelling places his enemies shall banquet. But those that deal with you, let them sew up their mouth, lest being cut with a razor they do not speak. For those that neglect my judgements, I will despise them and their seed shall wither, as corn out of season; but he that loves me, I will multiply him and he that adds to me I will add unto him a thousand.’

‘I perceive that I shall not deal with the Dr Kurz now,’ Dee told Kelly. ‘Well, I can let him understand that I had rather deal with the Emperor himself, and so shift myself of him.’

‘He is here again,’ said Kelly.

‘Yes, deal with him and hide nothing from him,’ said Uriel.

‘With Dr Kurz, oh lord?’

‘Yes. And therefore I said, he that adds to me, I will add unto him a thousand, but he that plays with me, lo, I swear, I will blot his name from life.’

Later that day, Dee records, Emeric brought himself in sight of the chamberlain, the noble Octavius Spinola, as I willed him, and he called Emeric to him and told him that this day Dr Kurz should understand the Emperor’s pleasure to confer with me, etc. About ten o’clock in the morning Emeric being in the ritter-stove saw Dr Kurz come out from the Emperor.

A stove was a heated sitting room; the ritter-stove was the guard chamber.

2

Friday, September 14, Dee records, I sent Emeric to Dr Kurz’s house in part with my commendations and to say that I had understood before from Dr Hájek of Dr Kurz’s desire to be acquainted with me, about which I was very glad and desirous. And now I trust that the Emperor’s Majesty by his authority has taken order with him by which to begin our acquaintance and, God willing, our perpetual friendship.

The doctor was at home and declared to Emeric, who had spoken to the effect of my message, that he had formerly sought various occasions of friendship with me, and that now he

is very joyful of the occasion offered by the Emperor's Majesty, and that sundry affairs hindered the opportunity of our meeting this day, but tomorrow at any hour, at my choice, he would be ready to welcome me to his house. And so with the usual phrase of offering all his services to my pleasure, he sent Emeric to me with his answer.

Whom God joins together, let no man put asunder.

Whom God and Caesar couple, let them remain coupled.

3

Saturday, September 15, Dee records, I came to the foresaid (called Dr) Kurz about one o'clock in the afternoon. He had all day been ready to have heard me if I would so have had it, but I sent him word in the morning by Emeric that after noon (as now at this hour) I would come to him.

Being come, he entertained me courteously; and two chairs being at the table's end, he gave me the pre-eminence by a friendly kind of earnestness. Then he told me that long ago in Germany he had heard of my fame and seen my writings, and that he was very glad of the opportunity now of my coming to this city, and that in other ways he was desirous of my acquaintance but chiefly seeing the Emperor's Majesty 'ore tenus' (for that was his phrase) by word of his own mouth had willed him to hear what I had to say to his Majesty.

I began and declared my long course of study for forty years, always by degrees going forward, and desirous of the best and pure truths in all manner of studies in which I had passed, and that I had passed as many as were commonly known and more than are commonly heard of. But that at length I perceived only God (by his good angels) could satisfy my desire, which was to understand the natures of all his creatures, and the best manner how to use them to his divine honour and glory and the comfort of the elect and also to the reproof and confusion of the adversaries of his name and honour. And in this I had dealt in various ways, and at length had found the mercies of God such, as to send me the instructions of Michael, Gabriel, Raphael and Uriel, and various other of his good and faithful messengers, such as I had here now brought books – about eighteen – to show him the manner of their proceeding. And that I thought it good to begin at the last book which also most concerned this present Emperor Rudolf. And so I did. And so by degrees from book to book lightly I gave him a taste or sight of the most part, and also let him see the stone brought me by angelical ministry.

All things being seen and heard that in six hours I could show him, at length he required of me what conclusion or summary report he should make to the Emperor. I answered, as he had occasion of the things seen and heard; but if he would follow my counsel, somewhat expert in

these divine and angelical doings, that his Majesty was to thank God for his great mercies and graces offered, and that by me, one who most sincerely and faithfully gave his Majesty to understand the will of God in this, and that his Majesty was to do as Mary, the blessed virgin did, to lay up all these my informations in his heart and say, Behold the servant of the lord, let your will be done, and so to attend the manner of the lord's proceeding, while he framed his life as it became every Christian to do.

He said that, to help his own memory, he would write some short note of his observations of my speeches, and the things seen and marked; and that he would tomorrow, being Sunday, or on Monday, if he conveniently could, make a report to the Emperor, and so with all speed give me to understand further of the Emperor his Majesty's will and pleasure. At this he courteously brought me down to the street door of his house, and I came home after seven thirty in the evening.

In the meantime, while I was occupied with Dr Kurz, Kelly was visited at our lodging by a wicked tempter who denied Christ's existence; and said that as the heart received comfort of all members of the body, so he, who is God, of all things received comfort by the angels and the other members of the world. And said that I was now with one who would use me like a serpent, with head and tail compassing my confusions, etc.

He earnestly reviled Kelly in many ways, and said that he should be damned, and said, moreover, that our practices should never come to any fruitful end. He also said that in my former records I had noted many a lie and untruth.

4

On Monday and Tuesday, September 17 and 18, Dee records, I sent Emeric up to the castle to listen for an answer to Dr Kurz's report to the Emperor of what he had perceived by me.

On Monday Octavius Spinola had sent into town for Emeric and told him that the Emperor had care and desire to understand my doings with the doctor; and therefore he asked Emeric if I had been with the doctor, and he affirmed that I had.

'The Emperor will be glad of this,' he said.

And yet, as I began to note, Emeric coming on Tuesday in the face of the doctor in the ritter-stove, had not one word spoken to him that either he had spoken to the Emperor or he had not. And therefore I suspect that the doctor does not deal honestly, faithfully or wisely in this so weighty a case.

And for as much as he told me that the Emperor his Majesty was persuaded that he was

pious, etc, perhaps he would be loath now to prefer me to the speech of the Emperor, seeing both he himself and the rest of his council stood persuaded to the contrary of this king. Hereupon this great delay upon sinister report made to the Emperor might follow, etc.

5

Friday, September 21, 10 a.m.

As I and E. K. were together in my study earnestly discoursing of auricular confession, public confession and confessing to God alone, and of the authority of the church and the manner of the same authority using to release or retain sins, Dee records, E. K. saw one walk on the table between him and me. Thereupon I framed me to write and note what should be showed or said. E. K. willed me to set down the show stone. So I did, and he looked.

Uriel appeared, the scarf over his head and face to his waist, but his hair yellow behind on his head so that Kelly recognised him.

‘Go and wash yourself, for you are a liar, you are a drunkard, and therefore you are a sinner,’ he told Kelly.

After dinner Uriel appeared again with the words of the lord.

‘In what could I show myself more, either to this age or to this Emperor, than with rebuking him for his sins from heaven? Who is able to promise more or to perform more assuredly than I, which lighten and make all things? Yet they do not believe. Yea, they rejoice in their own folly and despise me; yea, because they despise you, whom I have sent with my word to them. Well, thus says the lord, they had despised their own garlands and have trodden their food under feet, they have rent their robe in pieces and have cast them into the waves. They are become masterless dogs, for I have forsaken them. And lo, Rudolf, I will scatter your bones and your head shall be divided in many pieces. I will bring in your enemies over all your kingdoms and for your sake shall many thousands perish. He also that thinks himself wise, if he die a natural death, then say, I am not nor do I live with my people.’

Contra Kurz, Dee noted.

‘But because you have done what I commanded you and have not forgotten my name,’ Dee was told, ‘I will plant you myself and you shall grow and out of you shall spring a mighty and terrible sword whose hilts shall be as the carbuncle and edge like the sting of a dragon and I will not suffer you to fall nor shall your enemies ride upon you.’

‘Satan hunts hard after you,’ Uriel told Dee, but assured him that despite that he was to be rewarded for his commitment.

‘Behold, I had determined to have rooted out the English people to have made a

wilderness and desert of it, to have filled it with many strange people and to have tied the sword to it perpetually.’

Dee thought about it but decided there was no necessary contradiction in creating a wilderness and then filling it. The filling of it with strangers should have been for the conquest and in a manner razing or defacing all cities, towns and castles and so to have brought it to a wilderness and desert.

‘But lo, I will give you that land. For your sake only it shall not be consumed. And after certain months I will bring you home, yea, you shall live till you are able to pass the waves without a ship and to ascend the hills as the spiders do. Notwithstanding, I will take the crown from the house it is in and I will place it as I have prophesied to you. Notwithstanding for a time you shall live with Caesar.’

God will give me England, that is to say, spare it from destruction for my sake, Dee noted. And the destruction might have happened if the Armada had not been dispersed by that storm, it would have brought a strong enough force to have laid England waste. It had already been prophesied to them, it was still all yet to come, and yet already it was thwarted. And the English crown was taken from the Tudors to the Stuarts. As for living with Caesar, the Emperor Rudolf, Dee noted, I remained for the most part in Bohemia and in the Empire till 1589. But the spiders were a mystery. Perhaps spiders flying in the air are carried by strings of their own spinning or making, or else I know not how, he speculated. Or maybe Uriel was prophesying air travel and it was to some future incarnation of Dee’s that he referred.

And then Dee asked, ‘Oh lord, what shall become of my good friend the Lord Laski?’

‘Of Laski thus it is said, you have groaned for him and have placed him in your heart. From henceforth I will reconcile him to me and I will cease my anger upon him and he shall come here shortly. But he is a wanton and very prone to sin. But hear what I say to you.’

‘He seems to talk with one far off,’ said Kelly.

‘Caesar thought you had the philosopher’s stone and still thinks so. Even as I choked the gluttonous Israelites with quails, so will I choke him with that secret. Behold, you shall write to him saying that he does not regard heaven. And say to him that you can make the philosopher’s stone. I will perform it unto you. You shall do it And I will give to you a special virtue in healing, that whenever you come here you shall understand the truth. And this I do because they shall not despise you.’

‘Oh Lord,’ said Dee, ‘for me to be despised in doing your commandment is honour and comfort to me. But as concerning your honour and glory, you in your wisdom know what is best to be done.’

‘Notwithstanding,’ said Uriel, ‘you shall see him perish before your face. Lo, from this time I will bless you marvellously, and I will help you in all your works.’

‘What shall I do with Dr Kurz as concerning his answer?’ Dee asked.

‘Handle him like a man, for he will deceive you.’

‘I request but one thing from you for all my labour and travel,’ said the impetuous Kelly. ‘That is, that this doctor might this night be bereft of his life, to the terror of others.’

‘Have patience,’ said Uriel. ‘God turns all to his glory and your commodity. Tomorrow I have something else to say.’

6

‘For this cause I say to you,’ said Uriel the following morning, ‘write to Rudolf, saying, I can make the philosopher’s stone, because I would place you with them, according to their hope and imagination. That while they think little of me and of the sweetness of my message and testimony, I might burst out amongst them as the mighty waters do out of the hills when the earth moves.

‘Since they will not tie you to them from heaven, you shall tie them to you from earth, that you may rejoice when you see their destruction, and be ready clothed for him that is to come. It was said to you, my mother says she will chose an emperor in earnest; but it is Ernest that shall sit upon his seat. Behold, there shall be no seed left in him for his wickedness.’

Rudolf had no legitimate offspring and Ernst, Maximilian’s second son, a year younger than Rudolf, was the favoured candidate for the succession. He was to die, however, in 1595 in his 42nd year.

‘The blessings that I have offered him shall return again and I will leave his house naked. But when he sees and has gold, which is the thing he desires, and those that counsel him do most desire him, then shall he perish with a most cruel, terrible and unheard of mischief. I have written his name within my hand because I would not forget to punish him. Behold, I could send the winds to devour him, which would turn to my honour. But I have a care over you.’

Uriel also warned them, ‘Those that are his counsellors have commanded him, rather than counselled him, to have no dealing with you at all. And he is possessed with a great and mighty devil. And behold Belzagal, who is the fury and prince of the Turks, assists him in his wickedness, for he knows it may come to pass that his kingdom shall be short. But give ear to me. Fawn upon Caesar as a worldling, that you may draw him with the world to see the glory of God, but to his destruction. For how much more a man’s felicity is in this world, the more shall be the burden of his destruction.’

These were dangerous messages to receive and record. And now that Dee had shown Kurz the spiritual records, their angelical dialogues were no longer secret.

‘There are people that gape after your books and speak vainly of things that are not. Therefore I counsel that they dwell not long with Poland. Behold, when Laski comes, he shall not hastily return to Poland till I whisper in his ears.’

And he added cryptically, ‘He is dead that sought your life. I have more to say but they are not yet necessary.’

‘When shall I prepare myself to go for my books?’ Dee asked.

‘I do not speak of what I do not know,’ said Uriel. ‘Now I will become a courtier.’

And he went.

7

Dee wrote to the Emperor as instructed, saying he could make the philosopher’s stone.

Oh serene Caesar, many very important things, great heavenly mysteries and secrets of almost all the creatures of God and even of God himself, by the command of your Imperial Majesty have been declared and made manifest by me faithfully, sincerely and diligently, as far as could be done in the space of six hours, to that man to whom you wished the same things to be seen, heard and understood in my presence. Whether your Imperial Majesty has received a straightforward account, as though by the just estimator of things, or judgement has been interwoven with the narration, or what kind of censure of the whole process was devised, or what caution was advised to you in proceeding with me, or what counsel was entered into and taken for the form of your imperial reply, I am not so immoderately curious as to fish out. Nor otherwise am I concerned more than befits me, a faithful, sincere and devoted servant of almighty God and (in God, therefore on account of God) of your holy Imperial Majesty, even by other reason concerning the prudent and gracious resolution of your sacred Imperial Majesty sent before.

I see, however, that, as I have received as yet no reply to the communication sent, through the virtual stimulus of such deep silence I am somewhat moved to warn your holy Imperial Majesty for the second time, lest you in any way suspect and believe that this divine, divinely offered mercy, so unexpected, so great, so unheard of, so admirable, so manifold, so essential to the imperial state and to the Christian republic, so certain, so prepared and through your faithful servant to be confirmed and administered to you, lest you suspect and believe that this is a matter of small moment or something of human invention or is, was or will be a deceit of the devil.

By such and so grave an error on the part of your Imperial Majesty I fear that the anger of almighty God may be vehemently kindled, and I am especially fearful lest, spurning this mercy of God you may provoke the indignant vengeance of the same.

Wherefore, when I see heaven itself and such heavenly mysteries are not the subject of such great interest to your sacred Imperial Majesty as I might have wished, I, rather than that God of his formerly unheard of free mercy offered to your Imperial Majesty should lack with our posterity credence and the strength of evident truth, in the name of God and to his praise, honour and glory, and to satisfy the noble desire of your Imperial Majesty concerning that blessed stone, called the philosopher's stone, for infallibly seeing, possessing and using it, I assert to your holy Imperial Majesty that I am able, by divine grace and favour, to perfect that same stone.

And therefore if your Majesty should wish in the meantime to hold me closely dear to himself and if, in accordance with the dignity of so great a mystery and benefit, to be presented freely and humbly to him by me, he will deign to treat me graciously, not however distinguishing me by any higher title than befits your Majesty's philosopher and mathematician, by this letter in word and heart I promise and sacredly vow before almighty God, that I shall deliver into your imperial hands this philosophic work, perfected in all its numbers, without requiring your financial aid for the completion of the work, in the shortest possible time in which it can be done by the consent of God.

About the other secrets I perceive I must at present be silent. Now, however, I wish to understand your sacred Majesty's gracious, free and constant goodwill in the previous communication only from your own gracious lips or from your own imperial letter. For I know no one worthy and fit at this time who ought to become my Mercury in these and other secrets of nature and art in the presence of your Imperial Majesty.

8

Monday, September 24, 8 a.m., they consulted the show stone on two immediate issues, Dee records.

The one by reason of the letter which I had written to the Emperor, and was minded to go to show it to the Spanish Ambassador before I sent it to the Emperor, to have his opinion of it, and also to bear it.

Secondly, by reason of foul slanderous words which were spoken of me here at this ambassador's table, that I was a conjuror and a bankrupt alchemist and came here to get somewhat of the Emperor. And that I had sold my goods and given to the Lord Laski the

money, and that he had deceived me. To these untruths the ambassador replied on my behalf, for which I meant to thank him.

The only item Dee records giving to Laski was his copy of *Catalogy Gloriae mu'ch chassanai* published in Venice in 1564. Dee noted in his library catalogue, 'The Lord Laski had it for the Bible of Rob. Stephens.' Was that to replace Dee's own copy of the Robert Stephens 1555 Bible that he gave to Kelly?

'I have entered in amongst you and it is my spirit that leads to the ambassador from Spain. I will reward him,' said Uriel.

As for the slanders, 'it is better to be poor with those that are poor in spirit,' he told them, 'than to be rich with those that are gluttons and with the princes of the earth. You shall be with Caesar, despite the devil. I have said.'

I do not understand this, how it is, or how it shall be verified, or with which Caesar, Dee wrote.

As I had finished this action and was come to my study door, Emeric was returned again from the Spanish ambassador, to whom I had sent him desirous to know his leisure for me, who had now sent me word by Emeric to come to dinner, and so he would have leisure, etc.

Of this I was very glad, and went there to dinner.

9

He had me brought into his innermost study where he himself was writing letters, Dee records. And after I had complained of injury and violence done to me by foul slanders and that at this honour's table, to which his honour had replied on my behalf, and therefore I thanked him most humbly and sincerely, I said that his Majesty the Emperor himself could bear me witness that I used this phrase to him that I did not come for his riches. 'I did not come to you, oh most serene Caesar, because of your riches, that I might thence become rich, but, sent by God, I do not dare to do otherwise than to declare his will to your Majesty.'

And therefore it was evident how falsely they had slandered me. And because I perceive that Dr Kurz has not dealt with due entertainment of me either as a stranger or a student or a mathematician or as one to whom, to my face, he gave great praise, as of one long since of great fame in Germany, and so in his good estimation, etc., and least of all as of one who offered such great courtesies to his Majesty the Emperor as he was made witness of, I thought it good to send to his Majesty the Emperor this following letter, and so read it to him after dinner, when I showed him *Librum Pragensem sive Caesarem, The Book of Prague or Caesar*, and moreover *The Tenth Book* whose former titles was *Libri sexti mystici tertiarius, The Third*

Portion of the Sixth Mystical Book, and there showed him various actions already translated into Latin, because to translate them now from the English seemed both tedious to me and not so readily pleasant to him. All things on his part considered, his summary final conclusion was of the last offer in my letter, as well as of the great actions and divine purposes.

For the first, he declared that he was lineally descended out of the consanguinity of one who was a gentleman but unlettered at first, who left his wife, children and family in Majorca, and ascended a hill there, and remained a whole year in a solitary place, and at the year's end he came down, but so learned and wise that all who knew him before wondered at it. And that same man was called Ramon Lull. And that he made that which is called the philosopher's stone.

'As I understand,' he said, 'there is good record of it in England. Therefore I see that it is a truth and possible. And as he has granted the knowledge of it to one man, so he may grant it to another. And as for the other higher matters, I perceive that God intends some great matter in this world. But I am not able to judge or determine of it. But I am of this mind: where I can in any way further the service of God, I will be ready and obedient. And as for the Emperor himself, I find him of a good nature, courteous, most zealously Catholic; yea, ready to shed his blood in the cause, if opportunity required. He understands Latin well and speaks sufficiently well.'

'That is true,' I said, 'for he spoke well in Latin to me on various things.'

'Moreover,' said he, 'as concerning you, I saw him very well affectionated, making great account of your book, etc. Therefore you are not to regard these Dutchmen's ill tongues, who can hardly brook any stranger, etc.' Dutch as in Deutsch, German speakers.

Upon further matters that I had to show him, I offered my ready repair to him at all times of his good leisure, being called or warned. And he, desirous to see the stone brought to me by an angel, willed me to come tomorrow also to dinner.

10

I went to dinner to the Spanish ambassador and carried with me the stone brought me by an angel, and the fourth book in which the manner of the bringing it is expressed. And also I carried with me *Librum sextum sanctum mysticum, The Sixth Mystical Book*.

After dinner, when I had shown him these things, his final answer was that truly he took the doing to be done by a good angel. And by Mary, the matters to be too great.

'Therefore,' said I, 'they are for the service of God and not only to man.'

He said he was a sinner and not worthy to be privy, much less to be a doer in them.

Notwithstanding, whatever he could do that was acceptable to God, he would be most obedient to do. He desired a copy of the letter to the Emperor that he might consider the contents circumspectly before he should deliver it, to which I consented. Rendering his honour thanks, I departed.

After my return home, I found Kelly resolved to leave here tomorrow for his wife and so straightway to England; which was a grief to me. But what can I do, but refer all to the mercies of God, whom I have called upon for wisdom to serve him with? I have put my trust in the lord, I have not murmured at any such pangs and temptations hitherto. The mercies of the highest be upon me, as I have put my trust in him.

Now we were all brought to great penury, not able to sustain our state any longer without Lord Laski, or some heavenly help. Besides this, I understood the Queen's displeasure at my departure, and the Bishop of London's intent to have begun to have accused me of conjuration and so to have had the secret assistance of you know whom.

But who was 'you know whom'? Was it Barnabas Saul? Or Charles Sled? Or was it Kelly? Why else, writing this in Prague, did Dee not give a name? What other 'you know whom' would there have been there who might have read it?

11

Wednesday, September 26, 1584.

About half past ten, Dee records, Dr Kurz sent his servant with Mr Simon Hájek to know my lodging. He had passed not far off in a lane on horseback going into town himself and so met Mr Simon Hájek at the lane's end.

The next day at about seven o'clock Dr Kurz's servant came from his master to tell me that his master would come to me at nine. At nine Dr Kurz came on horseback to me at my lodging at Dr Hájek's house by Bethlehem. He saluted my wife and little Katherine, my daughter. Mr Kelly had gotten him into his chamber, not willing to be seen.

After he had come up into my little study and sat there, in Mr Kelly's usual place, and I in mine, I began to complain of the great injury done me here.

'For I came as a sincere and faithful servitor of his majesty the Emperor, intending all goodness and honour to him, and no hindrance, loss or hurt. Nor did I come "on account of the riches of Caesar that are to be gathered by me" as I said expressly to his Majesty. I was, before I came here, of good name and fame, both in this court and all over Europe, as you yourself, Doctor, can bear me witness, and several others in this court.

'And that here my good name and fame should suffer shipwreck, where I thought I had

been in a sure haven of my principal patron, I think that a great injury is done me. I know no means how to help it, but to give you warning of the envious, malicious backbiters that also are about this court, that as you find occasion you might encounter this evil and foul monster intruding itself in so mighty a prince's cause.'

The doctor seemed not to know what I meant. I told him that at a nobleman's table there was one of great account who said that there was an Englishman come to the Emperor, a bankrupt alchemist, a conjuror and necromantist, who had sold his own goods and given the Lord Laski the money, and that he had beguiled him and that now he would fain get some of the Emperor's money from him, etc.

The doctor seemed greatly to dislike these slanderous words and said that he never heard of any such, with some few words more of the wicked manner of backbiters.

After this, as concerning making report to the Emperor of what I had shown him at his house, he said that he had made a plain and sincere report, to which his Majesty the Emperor had as yet given no answer.

'And to be plain with you,' he said, 'his Majesty thinks them almost either incredible or impossible, and would have some leisure to consider them, and is desirous to have sight of those Latin actions you showed me, or a copy of them, and especially of that which contains a paraphrase of the Apostolic creed.'

I answered that I would not deliver my books out of my hands; as for a copy of them, I would at leisure write it that his Majesty might have it. And then I told him further that because it was so long since I heard any word from him, I had letters ready to send to his Majesty the Emperor, to have further declared my mind to him, and I declared to him the tenor of them. And he told me that about three o'clock in the afternoon his man should go to the court, and if then I would send them, his man would carry them. I answered that I would wait a day or two for the Emperor's return here.

After this we talked of some mathematical matters, and I showed him the little book *De superficierum divisionibus* set forth by me and Commandino, printed at Pesaro in Italy.

It was a twelfth century mathematical text by Machometus Bagdedinus – Abu-Bekr Muhammed ben Abdelbaqui el-Bagdadi – edited by Dee and Federico Commandino of Urbino and published in 1570.

He said that he never saw it before. I bade him take it with him to peruse. And if I had another copy I would give it him, but I had none other but that. I showed him also the *Propaideumata aphoristica de praestantioribus quibusdam naturae virtutibus*, which he had never seen before. This was a book of aphorisms by Dee, published in 1558.

After this, with mutual courtesies offered on both parts, after the manner of the world, he took his horse and returned homeward.

12

Dee sent his letter to the Spanish ambassador, asking him if he would deliver it. Was he afraid that Kurz might fail to pass it on? At the same time he wrote to the ambassador defending the spiritual actions.

‘So far is it unlikely that any Christian of sound mind could argue that our mystical actions were devilish frauds, or even suspect so; rather he should be willing to admit humbly and very fearfully that such a secret of God thus proposed, in examining these things, subjugates human reason, and there is made manifest in them the marvellous mercy of God towards his chosen.

‘I thus far in these things find myself to be nothing else but a scribe’s pen writing swiftly through me. For I am accustomed to note down the things seen and heard in my presence most faithfully, letter by letter, sometimes verbatim, and sometimes several words received together at the very moment in time in which they are delivered. And now into how many volumes has our labour come out. From all these we await the fruit and the success, such as he ordained who all things obey.’

As soon as he received a response from the Emperor, he added, ‘I must prepare myself for a journey, on account of having to transfer family, books and some apparatus of mine here before the harshness of winter.

‘Then with the gracious favour of his Caesarean Majesty and under the protection of the Emperor himself, I shall be prepared to satisfy the will of almighty God in accordance with my strength to serve his sacred Caesarean Majesty as his philosopher and mathematician most faithfully from time to time.’

He annexed a post-script to the letter.

‘I considered it my duty and a wise procedure to signify to your magnificence in a few words that yesterday at nine o’clock that distinguished man and wise counsellor of your Caesarean Majesty, Dr Kurz, most kindly visited me in my workroom and heated chamber close to Bethlehem where he was able to see that my current library was nothing else than the holy gospels of God and the Holy Bible and the particular books of our mysteries. Now I in a humble manner among other points of objection complained about the long delay that lapsed between the account made of my affairs by that self-same man and the receipt of a reply about them from Caesar. He asserted that he had done nothing more than deliver to his Caesarean Majesty what he had seen and heard at my establishment and added no opinion of his own

concerning them, but to Caesar they had seemed virtually impossible and incredible. Concerning his response to me his Majesty wished at this point to consider further with himself, so I made reference to that letter of mine to be sent to his Majesty and related its tenor to him in brief. He immediately wished to have the letter so that it could be sent to his Majesty as from midday. I said that I wished to wait a few days for the arrival of the letter from Caesar. Then we held a very short conversation about mathematics and I gave him to look over a little book of geometry by me and Federico Commandino of Urbino which had been published earlier, and after promise of mutual services on both sides, of kindness and benevolence, he departed.'

Dee sent the letters and a copy of the Emperor's letter the ambassador had requested on Michaelmas day at dinner time by Emeric Sontag, who delivered them to the secretary of the ambassador, and he to the lord ambassador, as he sat at dinner.

At the same time he sent Hugh on foot with letters to Kraków to Edmond Hilton, 'that my folk should not be out of quiet or afeared to see Mrs Kelly sent for, and no letters come from me, etc.' And he wrote too to Laski 'of our want of money, etc.'

13

And now Jane Dee was sick. They consulted the show stone.

Gabriel gave his diagnosis. 'When your wife was a milky substance growing by the perfection of the place and radical influence, which is the gift of the sun only, then the matrix or bag of nature, in which she increased, was not perfect, or of sufficient retention, by reason of a fever going before the conception, so that the angelical administration generally containing the vessel of life for the proportion of the world (for so the soul is sent into) entered by force of their order immediately before the inward parts were established in their nutriment and proportion. Which is the cause that the second vessel (*forsan, vasa feminina*) and lowest of nature (for I must use your terms) is so thin and tied short that it is not able to keep in or retain the simile and quiddity of her own substantial being and seed.

'Wherefore, when the rest of her digestions, according to her age and natural strength, fulfil their offices, by degree to be received into that receptacle, then the force of nature quails and by the subtlety of the principle or matter ejected, which seeks to take up on every centre a dwelling place, the guts and passages are offended and scalded with an intemperate heat, the most subtle and sharpest part being of a most penetrating virtue, and therefore seeking passage, mixes herself with the excrements where resting, she turns to her first form, which is blood, whose quintessence works in her own property and beginning and forces the excrement

sterforal many times to become bloody, the other part being heavier, notwithstanding unapt to descend, because nature seeks all its own, becomes corrupted; and so by virtue of nature is cast out as excrement being blood and matter.

‘But I tell you that so long as nature was in her lowest degree and the sperm kept more near together by reason of the spiritual heat in youth, it was not faulty in her; but in her sixteenth year when they were heavier and sought issue and descension then nature began to feel the retention, the chief basis and mother of her dwelling. Behold now, being faetive and the force of heat drawn to the nutriment of the creature; moreover the other active part compelled into a nearer place by the impediment of imagination, brings great danger now, by reason that nature is become very weak and not able to make excremental compulsion. But do you think that there is a remedy for this disease?’

‘Yes, truly,’ said Dee, ‘through the wisdom and mercies of the highest.’

‘I have taught you the disease,’ said Gabriel. ‘I will go and see if there is a remedy.’

‘The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob be merciful to my wife and me and send her remedy and cure of her grief,’ said Dee.

Gabriel returned and told them, ‘Come again after dinner.’

We had been sent for to dinner twice or thrice before, Dee records. So we went.

14

After dinner, around one o’clock, they returned to the show stone. Gabriel delivered the prescription.

‘Take pure wheat, a pint, one pheasant cock, alive, eleven ounces of masculine amber, which is the white amber, an ounce and a quarter of turpentine.’

‘Of washed turpentine?’ Dee asked.

‘Turpentine that is washed loses its virtue,’ Gabriel told him. ‘Break the cock in pieces with a pestle, his feathers plucked off, pound the amber small. Put all this into a gallon of red wine.’

‘May we take the red wine of this country?’

‘Yes,’ said Gabriel. ‘Distil them with a fire of the second heat.’

‘I beseech you how long shall they stand in steep?’ Dee asked.

‘As you wish,’ said Gabriel. ‘Still it again the second time, the faeces being cast away. And add something more to the fire, so that it is a quarter towards the third. Let her fast from meat forty hours. And let her divide the medicine into three parts. The first part let her drink, being milk warm, by little and little. The second part let her make a sauce of for five or six

meals. The last part let her use in absconditis, and she shall have her health.'

'I beseech you, in how many days' compass would you have this to be done?' Dee asked.

'It is no question, the necessity of the thing teaches.'

'As concerning the infant, what state is it in?'

'Shut your mouth, seek not,' said Gabriel.

'I am contented,' said Dee.

But he still had his questions. 'As concerning the pheasant cock, I do not know how or where to get it.'

'All the creatures of the world except that will not help,' said Gabriel. 'I have taught, you take care.'

'The thanks, honour and praise be to the highest and I thank you for your charity and goodwill to impart these things to me.'

'You shall have no more from me until you are repentant and reconciled and made apt for my school.'

Kelly snapped back, 'You might give this table virtue to cure her, or cure her with some one thing, or simple, if you are good angels.'

'The virtues of God's creatures are known to us, which we may open to you, and the power of giving virtue in God,' said Gabriel. 'Therefore, cease your malicious tongue. I have no more.'

'They are gone,' said Kelly.

15

Thursday, October 4.

'Here is he that is covered with the scarf,' said Kelly.

'Hear you that says hear me. If you had tarried at home and wanted my admonishment, your children had been scattered, your wife had ended her days with sorrow, and lo, the birds of the air had rested on your carcase.

'If you were held by the hand and attended on by heavenly pilots when the seas would have swallowed you and Satan had power over you, if those that sought your life from city to city and conspire against you and your soul had overthrown you, if poison had prevailed with which your meat was often sauced, if the continual rages of Satan and the world had overthrown you, then had I not been your God, nor had done well to you.

'Hitherto you have said to me, what have you done for me or added to my name? Hear my voice. He that loves the world does not love me. You have not yet begged for my name, nor

been imprisoned for my sake; but I have turned the prison from you and have opened to you my mysteries.

‘If I should not suffer you to be proved then you were not for me, for those that are mine taste tribulations. Silver and gold I do not give, but my blessing is above the substance of the earth. Days there are that you must drink of gall and a time comes when you shall drink wine. In the meantime, those that give to you I will multiply all they have with a blessing a thousandfold, for those that give to you, I will give to them; and those that pluck back from you I will also pluck back from them.’

‘But will you give us meat, drink and clothing?’ said Kelly.

Oh Kelly, Kelly, wrote Dee in the margin.

‘There shall come a time if you dwell together and love me that in the twink of an eye you shall breathe your last and live again. And I will kick under my feet all the proud nations of the earth, for my day is at hand. But I am a jealous God, therefore be faithful. If I send you forth and they do not hear you, or measure you as a shadow at noon, go to the mountains and take up stones and break them in pieces with a mighty pestle, cast them against the winds and into the four parts of the earth. And say, thus and thus be it to them, thus and thus let the lord work for me; and your prophecy shall be true and what you say shall come to pass. So likewise if they hear you do to them that my blessing may also be known.’

‘Lord, what shall I do if they hear me?’ asked Dee.

‘Do to them the signs of good, as it shall come into your mind.’

‘I thank you, oh God, for this great comfort,’ said Dee. ‘My heart is greatly refreshed with this; you are my God.’

Uriel went, but returned again to say to Kelly, ‘Why do you seek to flee from me, and secretly put into your heart, etc?’

He said several things to Kelly which chiefly concerned him, and he would not utter them as now; but he told me that he had been determined to have sold his clothes and with as much speed as he could, with his wife, to have gone to Hamburg and so to England, etc. If his wife would not go, he would.

‘It is true, I will follow God; but I suspect you are not from God,’ said Kelly.

‘I will show you the water,’ said Uriel, ‘do what you choose.’

And then he told Dee, who was planning a trip to Kraków, ‘Do not take your wife Jane with you lest you have a new sorrow. Three of you shall go. The fourth, Thomas Kelly, who is Edward Kelly’s brother, shall be a servant to this house. I can well keep it.’

Uriel our housekeeper, Dee noted in the margin.

‘But when you come into Poland, do not be known. Lead out Laski by the hand and bring him here, and prophesy against his enemies, that I may break them in pieces, and may be mindful of my covenant. He has much need of counsel. I am with you.’

16

The next day, Friday, October 5, one of Dr Kurz’s servants came in the afternoon from his master to tell me that his master would come to me tomorrow in the morning, around seven, eight or nine o’clock, as I wished.

The following day, before seven o’clock, I thought it good, Dee records, to go myself to Dr Kurz rather than to suffer him to come to me so far, and that for several reasons. He does not specify them.

So I went to him and came before he was ready. When he was ready he came out but with nothing like so cheerful a countenance to welcome me as he had done at the first. I conjectured that he suspected that I would take his words in evil part, which he had to say to me from the Emperor, which, after I had spoken somewhat of the book that I leant him, and some other that had written somewhat of such matter of division of superficialities, and he had told me that my book was the most excellent in that argument, and so made a pause, he began in this way to divide his speech and said that as to his sins which had been reprehended by me, his Majesty is accustomed to resort to confession at a convenient time and place and has no doubts about the divine mercy. As far as I was concerned his Majesty was prepared to gratify me and do favours to me in whatsoever thing came under his power.

Dee responded, ‘I am sorry that my words are taken and understood by his Majesty in a different sense from that in which they ought to have been understood and taken. I had no desire to become his confessor but was commanded to inform him as I did that his sins had been reprehended in heaven, whence more consolation should be available to him than from the counsel of some friend or confessor calling his sins to account. For it declared the outstanding favour of the lord God, etc.

‘Insofar as his Majesty offered me that grace of his, I humbly accepted it. That I wished to be titled philosopher and mathematician to Caesar, the reason is multiple. On the one hand out of respect to my secret service to his Majesty, under that pretext of concealing in how much favour and authority with Caesareans and my fellow English I was lest to those here I might seem to be playing with trifles and to deserve no estimation and to be one against whom they could freely exercise their envy and their malicious tongues.’

I therefore requested Kurz that he would advise Caesar about the interpretation of those

words in which his vices were called into question.

Then he spoke of the second letter to the Emperor, the effect of which he had heard at my hands, and had sent on Michaelmas eve to his Majesty the Emperor a note and advice of them as he now said. And wished that they had been delivered before the Emperor had resolved on the former answer.

‘Those letters,’ I said, ‘are in the ambassador of Spain’s hands. And if he will not deliver them today I will fetch them for you.’

‘If you do,’ he said, ‘I will deliver them straightaway, for at eight o’clock you shall find me in the ritter-stove or hear of me there.’

‘Then,’ said I, ‘I will straightaway go to the ambassador.’

I went to the ambassador of Spain and reported all that had passed between me and Dr Kurz.

He said that by reason of his various affairs he had not had a good opportunity since the receipt of my letters to go to his Majesty the Emperor. But that he determined to deliver my letters with his own hand to his Majesty today. So with thanks to his honour I departed.

I went to the ritter-stove (or chamber of presence) where I found none of the guard, but very many people sitting outside. In the stove were three or four who went straightaway into the privy chamber and by and by Dr Kurz came out to me from the Emperor.

I asked him if he had told the Emperor of my grief conceived of his misunderstanding of my words.

He said yes, and that the Emperor did not take it in evil part. And so we had talk of various other things walking up and down together about a quarter of an hour. Among other things, I told him that the lord ambassador would deliver the letters himself to his Majesty the Emperor. So I departed and he returned to the Emperor into the privy chamber.

17

Sunday, October 7.

I went to the lord ambassador’s house and there I learned that the ambassador had yesterday delivered my letter to his Majesty and that answer was to be expected at Dr Kurz’s.

After dinner I went to Dr Kurz’s home to his lodgings and he had nothing as yet to say of the letter delivered by the lord ambassador. But we fell to other talk and I told him plainly that I had not hitherto lived obscurely, nor without care of maintaining and increasing my good fame and name. Therefore if for my sincere dealing I should here seem to be despised or not regarded or to be but a trifler, I thought I should be greatly injured. And I was sure that his

Majesty the Emperor was much ruled by him and as he framed his judgement so did his Majesty very often resolve in such matters as mine. So if I were not used in my causes as was reasonable and for the Emperor's honour, it should not be laid to any other man's charge but his.

He promised that he would deliver all in the best words he could, in friendly sort, etc.

After this he showed various of his labours and inventions, mathematical and chiefly arithmetical tables, both for his invention by squares to have the minute and second of astronomical observations, and so for the mending of Nonnius' invention of the quadrant dividing in 90, 91, 92, 93 etc. I then opened to him the secret of my glass for battering in a dark night, etc. He said that conclusion would be very acceptable to his Majesty. I told him that the glass was at Kraków, and his Majesty should see it by God's leave.

After this I told him I should like to have a passport or safe conduct to pass quietly and safely in any of the Emperor's dominions.

He thought his Majesty would willingly grant that, and asked me to write three or four lines as I would have it, and he informed me thus:

John Dee Englishman devoted servant of his serene Majesty most humbly begs his Imperial Majesty that he should deign to grant him for his great security on his journeys through the ample realms of his Majesty letters of safe passage.

When I came home I thought that I would gladly have the said passport, safe conduct or letters of passage more ample and beneficial, as for my wife, children, family, servants and goods whatsoever, and for one whole year to last from the present date.

I wrote thus: John Dee Englishman devoted servant of his serene Majesty most humbly begs his Imperial Majesty that to the said John on his own behalf and on that of his wife, his children, his household servants male and female and their furniture, that he see fit to grant in his clemency favourable and gracious letters of safe passage and free transit though all and whatsoever paths and roads of his Majesty's dominions and for a whole year beginning immediately after this present date.

I went to Dr Kurz with these last letters in a fair copy and I found him to be at the Hoff Rat Camer in counsel. And so waiting till they rose, at eight thirty, he came out with my letters in his hand which I had left with him the previous night. I showed him these written later, and he said they made no time limit but made them indefinite. So he took the later versions and I had the former ones back again. He went with them into the privy chamber and said I should not need to send for the letters but he would send them home by his man, and I went from him towards the ambassador Don Guillén de San Clemente, whom I found coming with the

ambassador of Spain (who had come three or four days earlier to give the order of the Golden Fleece to the Emperor) and the marshal of the court, going to have audience with the Emperor. And as I stood in the court of the ambassador's lodging, and the three of them coming on horseback, the ambassador my friend took off his cap, as did the new ambassador and marshal twice very courteously to me. I saw it was not a time to speak to the ambassador nor to give thanks, take leave and ask his pleasure to the Lord Laski. So following them to the court, I went on home to my lodging.

18

Dee was later sent information about another dinner conversation concerning him. This one had taken place at the table of the apostolic nuncio, the Vatican representative in Prague, Giovanni Francesco Bonomi, Bishop of Vercelli, who was preparing for his departure. The information seems to have been an extract from a memorandum but it is not clear who wrote it or who sent the information to Dee. Was it a secretary of Rudolf's, or of some other monarch or ambassador?

‘At the table of the said lord nuncio various rumours were spread about Mr Dee and various opinions and judgements concerning him. He was blamed amongst other things for not having hesitated to offer to the Emperor, of his own accord and without having made a request to those who have power and authority to determine, an apparition of blessed spirits (which they, however, call and believe to be evil ones) with the aid of certain magical characters (I am using their very words) regardless of the church's disapproval; whereas in fact good spirits are not enchanted and moved to appear by magical rites but the evil ones are usually evoked by these methods. The apparition of good angels, however, does not happen in a distinct shape which is perceived by human eyes, but is somehow vaguely encompassed by them while they are in a state of ecstasy and rapture. Also that the Imperial Majesty had purposely recoiled from that lest he should burden his conscience with scruples or cause some danger to his soul; he had for that reason not wished to admit Mr Dee to any further audience, but had referred him to Mr Kurz. It was also observed that since Dr Dee had a wife and was thus given to the cares of this life and to worldly matters, it would hardly be possible for him to enjoy the intercourse of good angels for that happened only to very holy persons, living far away from their married quarters, and to solitary hermits.

‘These censures of critics and more things that were mentioned there were taken notice of by others as well as by the said N. who was present at the meal. Be that as it may, it is certain that the Emperor (conforming entirely to the authority of the church) communicated to the

most reverend lord nuncio everything that Mr Dee had proposed during the first audience. Thence, at length, it came to this conversation at table.

‘They believe in fact that the dealings with the Emperor might rather have originated from another, more important, matter. I am indeed of the opinion that they prefer one philosopher’s stone to ten visions of angels. However, I have thought it worthwhile to send all this information to your Imperial Majesty so that the aforesaid Mr Dee may be forewarned shortly before his arrival; for (as the saying goes) darts cause less damage if they are foreseen, and especially because, certainly, all this will eventually also come to the notice of the holy see, as the lord nuncio has indicated. Furthermore, they all affirm, as though with one voice, that he was made a doctor of medicine in the Aula with a monthly stipend of forty florins by the good offices of the same Kurz, or that this was offered to him upon his request. While I make enquiries on this point (as is very often done) I can neither confirm nor deny the fact, for I have no certain information. A Spanish envoy quite recently wanted to know from me when he would come here. Kurz, when asked, praised him, saying that he is extremely learned in a great number of subjects. Both their wives and their families are well. They know that he has gone into Hungary and are, therefore, in doubt about his return. Since they expect his return from day to day they have not wanted to send any letters to the wives, etc.’

However much Dee may have mistrusted Kurz, it seems to have been through Kurz’s good offices that Dee received the degree of Doctor from the University of Prague, the title by which he has ever since been traditionally known. If the degree was indeed conferred, the stay in Prague had not been totally in vain. But Dee’s son Arthur, in a letter to Mr Aldrich in Norwich in 1649, wrote that his father ‘was a general scholar and would never take the degree of Dr, although he was generally styled so ... he never would take any profession upon him.’

19

There are no records for the next three months between October 8 and December 20, 1584. Dee and Kelly left Prague for Kraków, but whether they spent all their time there, and what they were doing, is not known.

Were they disappointed at the lack of an immediately positive response to the approach to the Emperor? Dee’s audience with Rudolf had taken place on September 3. The ensuing encounters with Kurz had been inconclusive. But wasn’t departing within a month impetuous? Were they so sure that nothing further would result? Or had they left in order to collect their library and equipment? Having promised to produce the philosopher’s stone, did they now have to gather the apparatus to do so? But if that was the case, wasn’t an absence of nearly

three months excessive? Or were they spending time attempting to produce the stone before returning?

While he was in Kraków Dee donated his copy of a Greek manuscript of Boethius' *Of the Consolations of Philosophy* to the library of the Jagiellon university, where it still survives, MS 620. He wrote a sixteen line dedication in it: 'I, John Dee, Englishman, Christian Philosopher and student of the mathematical arts, give this to the library for study in perpetuity ...' The inscription is dated November 24, 1584. Dee's own library catalogue, however, notes, 'I gave this book to Kraków library, July 28, 1584,' which would place the gift at his earlier visit to Kraków . Perhaps he donated the book then, before leaving for Prague on August 1, and wrote the inscription on his return.

TEN : ALCHEMICAL VISIONS

1

Dee and Kelly began their return from Kraków on December 20, 1584. They travelled in a coach which Dee had bought off a Mr Frizer, and had the infant Rowland and his nurse and John Croker with them. They arrived in Prague on the afternoon of December 30.

The following day Dee wrote to the Spanish ambassador, enclosing a letter from Laski.
Illustrious and magnific hero,

Though I have not yet seen to my private life, for the ordering of which I have borne many labours and undergone many expenses while I have been absent, nevertheless I was unwilling to hold for many hours after my return the letter sent to your magnificence by the noble Lord Palatine of Sieradz, lest I should seem to be lacking in some degree in my duty towards your magnificence and towards the Lord Palatine.

As to the incredible progress of the mysteries, I have many things to say and many to hear to elucidate the cause of truth despite the extreme unwillingness of some of its adversaries. About which matters when the time is ripe I shall be prepared both to hear and be heard, in such a fashion as will be most fitting to my sincerity and fidelity towards his Majesty.

Meanwhile I ask for a free interval of some days in order to rent a house for me and my own, a comfortable house, and also to arrange other matters pertaining to my household. May God the greatest and best deign to adorn and bless your magnificence.

2

Friday, January 4, 1585, Dee rented a house in Salt Street, not far from the market place in old Prague. It was owned by two sisters. 'But Mr Christopher Christian, who had for a long time been chancellor or registrar of Old Prague, made the covenant or bargain with me. He was married to one sister, Anne, and the other sister named Dorothea, also married, lived in the house, and was to move to another house of her own near by and to deliver to me and my family the whole house, with all the appurtenances of rooms and easements. I am to pay seventy dollars for the year, and to pay quarterly, at the expiration of every three months.'

3

January 6 Dee wrote to Dr Kurz.

Distinguished and accomplished Sir,

It could scarcely be in doubt whether I should be more affected at your good health and

my safe return to Prague: or rather more tormented with pain from the insults fabricated against me in the meantime here while I was away, and from the varied criticisms, quite excessive, cried out against me.

Hitherto I have done what I planned, I have caused my furniture to be brought here from Kraków along with my whole household with great labour and not inconsiderable expense on my part. The house which I have just now come from is so so: even so I rented it with difficulty. In this present week the system of our affairs requires that all our things should be quickly transported to this same house along with the household property and œconomia, to be arranged in a rough order. Meantime I should like to have your magnificence informed lest you take it amiss that I have not yet visited you. I hope that in this respect I have satisfied my duty precisely in that you agree with me that this saying has rightly become a proverb – quickly but well.

Not only was your letter to me on my departure a great consolation in the meanwhile; but in my absence the good opinion you conceived of me has given me great joy.

Kurz had written to Dee on October 8, but the spiritual records for October to December 1584, in which Dee put the letter, are missing, and the letter with them. Dee now assured Kurz that he would discuss the letter, and the attacks on him, as soon as he was settled in, and would ‘be very ready to do everything I can whereby it may be an established fact, with you and with posterity, that I applied my mind faithfully and sincerely, according to my standing, to the outstanding service of his holy Imperial Majesty.’

4

Saturday afternoon, January 12, Dee moved into the house in Salt Street.

And now, settled in Prague again, were Dee and Kelly engaged in producing the philosopher’s stone? Were the secrets of transmutation revealed to them so that they could deliver what they had promised to Rudolf?

According to Dee’s eldest son, Arthur, they were transmuting gold in Prague. In 1650 Elias Ashmole arranged for two of his friends, Dr Bathurst and Dr Wharton, to interview Arthur. Ashmole communicated the results of this interview to Anthony à Wood in 1685. Arthur, Ashmole wrote, ‘told them that, being but a boy, he used to play at quoits with the plates of gold made by projection in the garret of Doctor Dee’s lodgings in Prague.’ In the margin he added: ‘Mrs Dee, wife to his son Mr Rowland Dee, told me the other day that Arthur Dee her father-in-law has often told her the same.’

The spiritual actions resumed, Monday, January 14, 1585, with a sustained alchemical vision.

‘Here is one with a veil before his face, as it were, a hair cloth of ashen colour. I do not know him yet. I see a garden full of fruit, of various sorts. In the middle of it is a place higher than the rest. On that place stands a round house. It has four corners and four windows and every window is round and has four round partitions, round also.’

The house is round outside and square inside, Dee noted, to explain the corners inside.

‘It has four doors and at the east door is one step, at the south two steps, at the north three, and at the west door four steps. The first door is white, like crystal, transparent. The south door is of a high red colour, transparent. The north door is a bright black, not to be seen through like the rest. The west is green like an emerald stone. So is the south door like a ruby. The doors are all plain. The house inside, as it may be judged by the transparent doors, seems to be white and empty.

‘He that has his face covered opens the east door and all the house seems to be on fire like a furnace. The fire inside waves and moves about the house and by the roof. Now he opens the west door and it appears as if all the house were a fountain full of water, and there run various streams in the same one water, of which one comes and goes as if it ebbed and flowed; this stream goes around all the rest by the sides of the house, that is, as if it were the ocean sea encompassing the world. The next stream within that moves from the direction of the four sides and makes, in manner, four triangles or rather cones of water whose vertices rest cut off, as it were, by the middle stream of water which occupies the middle or centre of the house, and is in circular form environed.

‘Another variety of stream there is which comes from the four corners of an innermost square; and so runs diametrically or contradictorily towards that circular middle stream. The middle stream seems to issue out at the very centre of the place and to mount up, and making an arch of its course seems to fall circulariter in one circumference. The fires also had diversity.’

‘I wish you had noted the diversity of the fires also,’ Dee complained to Kelly. ‘Those that learn truly learn by parts.’

‘The colour of the water in the centre is most pure white. The waters of that St Andrew’s cross are like a water somewhat saffron coloured. The waters of the triangles are somewhat like a watery blue, which appears most in the tops of the arches of their flowing. For all spring otherwise. The uttermost water looks like quicksilver, as if it were somewhat mortified.

‘Now he opens the fire door again, and the fire appears in a square place. And there appear

four fires filling the whole place, leaving no vacuum. One of these fires seems to rise from the centre of the place, and to go in low arches to the four comers of the house. The house seems to be fourteen feet long on every side. The arches of these fires seem to come from a trunk of fire which rises from about the centre, and seems to be four feet over in diameter. This trunk seems to be three quarters of the height of the place high. The place seems to be as high as it is broad. On the top of this fiery trunk the fire seems to be in the form of a fiery globe, six foot in diameter, which reverberates and rolls within itself. From the sides of the trunk (between the globe and the arches) the fire goes up triangularly, filling everything, except for that which remains filled by the flames of fire which rise from the globe to the four comers of the house, filling all the place above the globe.

‘The colour of the fire of the four arches is very red. The rest are very pure, aerial, candent, etc. The motion of the trunk fire is swifter. The original centre of all these fires seems to be very little.

‘Now he opens the red door. The house seems darkish, of the colour of the smoke of a wax candle being put out.

‘By itself it is not, but by the sun it is clear.

‘It has four motions in it also, each one moving more swiftly than the other, all from the middle of the house. Three of them move arch-wise to the sides. The first and second arise to half the height of the place. The third occupies the other half. The fourth goes upright to the top of the house. The second’s (that he strikes against on the wall) is double to the space of the wall against which the first smites.

‘Now he opens the black bright door, and the house there seems full of black dust like gunpowder colour, or of a somewhat leadish colour. Now he seems to go down, fairly and softly from the house, down the little hill, and from there goes by a waterside to a rockish mountain. He speaks:

“‘Ascend. I am now ready for you. Bring out your mattock, spades and shovels. Enig veri eri.”

‘Now out of that rock come seven lean men with spades and shovels and mattocks, etc.

“‘Follow me.”

‘Now they have come up to the hill.

“‘Come on, dig till you find.”

‘Every one stands apart from each other, and they dig on the hill which before seemed covered with earth and grass, but now it appears to be a rock, and they dig and the fire flies out again at their strokes and some have broken their mattocks, some their spades, all except two,

one with a shovel, another with a pick-axe.

““Oh lord, we labour in vain,” said the seven workmen.

““So you are sure to do unless you have better tools.”

““Alas, we labour in vain.”

““I had you provide instruments to labour with, but you did not ask me whereabouts you were to labour. Therefore have you dug away what you saw and have repulse with what you do not know.”

““A dark man you are, and hidden from men, and so are your doings,” one of them said to the man covered with the hair-cloth of ash colour.

‘They stood gazing at each other.

““Have you not better instruments? Go, provide yourselves and return.”

‘They ran quickly to the rocky cave from which they came out first. Now they come again with great beetles of iron, and wedges. They knock their wedges, as we do in wood, and so break off great slakes of stone, like slate, and throw it down the hill.

““What a thing is this that this wedge is broken,” one of them said.

““We are worse off than we were,” said another.

‘Their wedges are for the most part broken, and the fire flies out of the stone in great abundance.

““The nature of this stone is not to cleave. Therefore if you have no other instruments you must cease.”

‘They are in great disquietness among themselves.

““Those that go on a journey provide themselves with clothes against all weathers. He who is worthy of the name of a conqueror carries with him all engines. Where the bridges are broken down he does not stay because he is prepared. Behold, he has supplies for time to come and his study is as well the event as is the means. So should true labourers do, considering what they work in. For the earth is a monster with many faces, and the receptacle of all variety. Go home, do not stand idle. Provide by arts for the hardness of nature, for the one sister weeps without the other.”

‘They go away quickly. They have their tools to harden and their steels to temper. It will be more than an hour’s space before they return. Therefore you may spend the time in your necessity and use the time of day as you are acquainted or accustomed. I also must overcome them or else their labour will be without fruit.’

After dinner they returned to the action.

‘Now the labourers are coming out They have wedges made long and sharp, and pickaxes with three very short pikes, and break up the rock or blackish stone, like iron mine or magnes stone, in roundish lumps as big as a twopenny loaf, about two or three inches thick. They pick or dig around the hole first and then afterwards use their wedges. The pickaxes have three heads, each pick bigger than the other. The first as big as one finger, the second as two, the third as broad as four fingers. And so after the first digging they fetch three or four cakes or pieces out of one hole and then they go to another. Now one of them is fallen into the ground up to the armpits. Now another is fallen in to the knees. Now the house standing there begins to shake and waver from one side to the other. Now the men have gotten out of the holes they were stuck in.

“‘Make an end of your labour.’”

‘One of the workmen said to the guide, “You must find a remedy or let us understand what remedy we shall find that you may descend from there; for lo, the peril you stand in is great. For this rock was nothing else but a shell, whose kernel is a bottomless lake and a mire quickened with some shut up water.”

“‘You came here as labourers, therefore make an end of your work and do not stand idle. If the house falls and I sink, then is your labour at an end. For the end of your labour is the fulfilling of my wish and the promise which you have made me.”

“‘We are ready to do our promise,” one of them said, “but we are more ready to provide that you may be amongst us so you may be free from danger.”

“‘Oh you of little wit, are you not ashamed? Which of you have dwelt within the secrets of this hill? Which of you intends to fulfil his promise? Judge not a thing in which you have no skill, nor to be slack in what you have to do. For the one has his reward of idleness and the other is condemned as rashness. For why? It springs on her mother ignorance. They say, ‘If we work it is against reason. Nor do your tools answer to this labour. Therefore we had rather be idle than labour about nothing; for to labour in vain is to do nothing. If we were determined to work how should we perform our determination, since the instruments for working are wanting?

“‘Gather up the pieces of your spades that are wood and may be joined together. The older and baser they are the fitter they are to turn up such soil.”

‘A smith comes by with a budget full of nails.

“‘What have you there?’” one of them said to the smith.

““Nails.”

Kelly explained, ‘They are like horseshoe nails.’

““You come in good time, leave your nails behind you and at your return I will pay you for them. See, God is not unmindful of us for nails are the fittest things to further your work. Join your spades and shovels together therefore and labour.”

‘Now they are mending their spades and shovels, the iron of them all off and broken. Now they work and throw away the earth like dirty sand and the scurf of the earth sticks to their spades and shovels. One goes behind and makes a trench to let the water out from the sand.

““How now,” said one of them, “Have we found harvest in the middle of winter?”

““Why, what have you there?”

““Marry, either alabaster or salt.”

‘Now one of them knocks a piece off with his shovel and reaches it up to his guide.

““Did I not tell you that the earth has many faces?”

‘They work easily now and cut it up like salt or alabaster. Now they have dug all the hill away, even to the house. Now the house seems built upon that white stuff.

““If we dig any further we shall undermine the house,” one of them says.

““Go to your business.”

‘They work.

““Soft, soft. Now labour with your hands as softly as may be. Stand aside.”

‘Now he takes one of the irons of their spades and seems himself to pare the sides of the foundation under the house and it seems to be a vessel of transparent glass and having fire within it.

““The fear of the lord is a burning fire, does not consume but rectifies the body; the old dross it wipes away and the daily influxion of the flesh and sin it separates from the soul. Behold, I say, he does not live but unto whom life is given; neither is there any joy but it is ascending; for the end of joy is glory; but glory is the consummation of desire, and the beginning of felicity. No man enters into joy but by life; nor is there any life but the fear of God. Whosoever, therefore, has the fear of God, let him draw near and come hither. Number exceeds not but by unities. Neither is there any multiplication but by order. For the root of number is one. And things that ascend are dignified by order.”

‘Out of this vessel go four vents ascending into that rock, which is the root, which is this building. It is said, “Behold, let my spirit enter in, let there be separation made within the house of the north, that the earth may be divided into her members. Cursed be that body that is not divided according to proportion answering to the division. For she has not yet cast off the

shape of darkness.”

‘Fire runs up into the house from out of the round glass vessel under the foundation of the house. And that fire makes a great noise – to be heard only, through the black, bright or marble door. Now that north door is mightily thrown open and there appear in the house like kernels of apples, and slime appears, and water thinner than slime, and there appears pure water also. Now there comes together stuff like yellow earth which the fire wrought out of the black earth; and the pure water runs into that yellow stuff.

““Of that take a part.”

‘The fire returns back again among the stuff in that house and there appear some of all creatures.

““Here is creation, and it is the first.”

‘Now he takes a lump of the earth lying by which was thrown up and he breaks it into six pieces like round balls. He takes a thing like a vessel of iron and puts into it that mixture of yellow earth and water. And it looks now like grass mingled with water.

““You are strong and will beget a strong child.”

‘Now he puts out the earth which he put in, and it is a lump of gold. He gives it to him that stands by.

““So are the seeds of the earth.”

‘Now he takes the second and puts it in.

““Corruption is a thief for he has robbed you of your best ornaments, for you are weaker in the second.”

‘He takes it out and it is as if it were pure silver.

““Where there is double theft, poverty ensues. But notwithstanding you are true; for you give to everything as much as it desires. You open the greatest ability and strength of your power, not such as it has been but such as it is.”

‘Now he puts in the third ball.

““You must wait for you are of a harder digestion; since you are the third, content yourself, for you are not an inheritor.”

‘He takes it out and gives it to one of them that stand by; it is a red metal like copper. Now he takes up another of the balls and holds it in his hand.

““Behold, your mother, heat is gone, and the enemy of life enters. For he that passes his middle age decays and draws to an end. Behold, you shall find a step-mother, for you came out of time.”

‘Now he puts it into the vessel.

“Let cold cover your face, let the north truly beget you, for you are an enemy to your predecessors. But you are of great virtue for of your excrement shall virtue receive dignity. And your virtue shall be a garland to nature; for you shall be visible when the others are silent. The seas shall not hinder your virtue notwithstanding your virtue shall differ with the seas; for as they differ, so shall you.”

‘Now he takes it out. It is a ragged thing like a smith’s cinder of iron and it has holes in it as if it were spongy. Now he takes up another ball of the earth; he puts it in.

“You are tractable and like an obedient daughter; but you shall be the fifth in the second and an instrument to the first.”

‘Now he takes it out. It is like a white whetstone, as he shaped it when putting it in. It is like tin. Now he takes up another ball and puts it in.

“You are the last that has in himself and by himself his being. Behold your face is like wax, but your inward bowels are like the anger of a serpent. Many shall have you but shall not know you.”

“Will you give me nothing?” one of them said.

‘A great cloud covers them all, the stone and all.’

7

The alchemists frequently referred to the alembic, the vessel of their experiments, as a house. The seven workmen, like the seven dwarfs, represent the seven metals under the influence of the seven planets: copper (Venus), gold (the Sun), silver (the Moon), tin (Jupiter), lead (Saturn), iron (Mars) and mercury (Mercury). The alchemist’s strategy of replicating creation is there – ‘here is creation, and it is the first.’ The flames of the alchemist’s furnace, the metals melted and dissolved, the circulations and separations and the ultimate production of gold are all featured. Was it a spiritual vision of the alchemical nature of the universe, or practical instruction in how to go about producing the philosopher’s stone? Dee still worried about how to deliver this. At the end of the action he noted, ‘I promised the stone to Rudolf and Kurz.’ But how was he to fulfil the promise?

‘When it shall please God,’ Dee implored the next day, ‘all veils and enigmata shall cease.’

But that was not to be.

‘Whatsoever I teach you has a mystery. And I am a mystery in myself.’ But, Uriel promised them, ‘Tomorrow in the morning with empty bellies I will tell you what it is you seek.’

Thursday, January 17, 1585.

‘Here he is now,’ said Kelly. ‘He has a great heap of earth or a little natural hill by him of orange or tawny colour, somewhat like a tawny lion. A woman comes and with a spade digs around it. Now a child comes, a man-child, out of a dark place, with a fire shovel in his hand. The woman has taken away all the earth and water appears where the earth was. The boy casts out that water with the fire shovel. The woman laughs at that. The woman is in green clothes and the boy in red. Now a woman with child, or with a great belly, in white clothes, comes. She puts her hand down to the ground and pulls out a little glass full of red oil. Now an old man with a crab-tree staff on his back comes, his clothes of motley colour. This old man takes the glass from the woman by force, with his fist he breaks the glass and all the oil runs about his arm, and out of that oil a book seemed to come, a very little book.

‘Plainer, truer or better can nothing be,’ he said, looking at the book.

‘These four found, but none had fruit but the last. Hear and write the mysteries of God with humble heart, not sitting but kneeling before the holy of holies.’

Dee knelt and prepared to write. The old man opened the book, which was as if of ivory, and began to read from it. Their mysterious instruction began.

‘Take of your dlasod.’

‘This is having the unknown explained by the more unknown,’ Kelly remarked.

‘My brother, leave off your childishness, do not murmur, you hinder me.’

‘He is in a cloud again.’ Kelly reported. ‘Now he is clear again.’

‘And luminous or from due degrees,’ he said. ‘Read it.’

Dee read it. ‘Take of your dlasod dignified, and luminous or from due degrees.

‘He seems to labour much about the reading of it,’ Kelly reported.

‘Gather or take fierce degree. I feel no power, therefore have patience. Notwithstanding, work it several days multiplying four digestions.’

‘Now he is in a cloud again.’

‘Pray that it may be given to me from God,’ instructed their instructor. ‘And then double dlasod and your rodlnr.’

‘It is a word which cannot be found.’

‘Mend it rlo.’

‘Must it be rlodnr?’ asked Dee.

‘Look about you, for Satan would hinder you of God’s benefits. Rlodnr. Diligently pray that you may understand.’

They knelt and prayed. Kelly prayed a short, fervent prayer, at which I rejoiced much, Dee records.

‘Now a beam comes from above into his head, as big as my little finger,’ said Kelly.

‘And purpose dlasod, take a swift image, and have the proportion of a most glorious mixture audcal and also lulo. Continue and by office seek rlodnr backwards by the red digestion. But he by the common or red darr gathers the ripest work. Purge the last fourteen well fixed. Then the four through your rlodnr. Roxtan finished more together at the lower body by one degree be by you for him hold it, for him in one of them.’

‘Now he lies down prostrate.’

‘Until of the last thing. In him becomes his red and highest degree of his resurrection through coition.’

‘Now a great thing like a fire covers him.’

9

Sunday, January 20, after dinner, about three o’clock, Dee records, as we sat together in the mystical study and the show stone being before E. K., our schoolmaster appeared in it.

‘Behold I open to you this key which is not worthy for the unworthy, nor are the unworthy worthy of it. Such it is as never entered into man before.

‘Take common rlodnr, etc. Take hold. Write it on a paper by itself.

‘Now you have what you sought for, you may apply it and find your own errors, you who are unworthy to receive any such thing.’

10

Take common audcal, purge and work it by rlodnr of four divers digestions, continuing the last digestion for fourteen days, in one and a swift proportion, until it be dlasod fixed a most red and luminous body, the image of resurrection.

Take also lulo of red roxtan and work him through the four fiery degrees until you have his audcal and there gather him.

Then double every degree of your rlodnr, and by the law of coition and mixture work and continue them diligently together. Notwithstanding backward, through every degree, multiplying the lower and last rlodnr’s due office finished by one degree more than the highest.

So does it become darr, the thing you seek for; a holy, most glorious red, and dignified dlasod.

But watch well, and gather him so at the highest: for in one hour he descends or ascend

from the purpose. Take hold.

11

Were Dee and Kelly now in receipt of the recipe for the philosopher's stone, delivered by spiritual instruction?

There are other accounts of how they came by the elixir. In February 1652 Elias Ashmole noted down a story William Backhouse of Swallowfield told him, far less spiritual, and not necessarily to be credited.

Sir Ed Kelly having cheated a lady of certain jewels was thereupon taken at Dr Dee's house at Mortlake by a pursuivant. (A pursuivant was an official with the power to execute warrants). When he was taken he told the pursuivant his life was in his hands and that it would do him but little good if by his taking him he perished, but promised him if he would let him go, he should be at one time or other sufficiently recompensed. The pursuivant took that engagement of his oath upon this and let him go. Upon this Sir Ed fled out of England. And afterwards the pursuivant hearing of the great fame of Sir Ed abroad, and remembering this engagement, went into Germany, and finding him out, Sir Ed in his sight (to requite his former kindness) made projection of as much of his elixir as made £2000 worth of gold and gave it to the pursuivant. And withal gave him a paper of some of his powder with which he returned into England and purchased about £100 per annum about Warwickshire. And of a flint stone which he took up in his own ground he made a diamond which he wore in a ring (with the help of his medicine) which was a very fair one, and supposed to be worth a £100.

This pursuivant asked Sir Ed how he came by this. He told him this story. That Dr Dee and he falling into the company of an Italian (who was in orders) at Prague, the Italian asked the doctor whether he knew that Dee which wrote the *Monas Hieroglyphica* – and perceiving him to own it let fall several words which Dr Dee took no notice of (to try whether he understood what he pretended to have written) for the Italian was supposed to be the true author. After walking into the fields and discoursing further of the power of the elixir and other secrets in nature, the Italian took up the skirt of his garment and in the bottom of which was sewed up a little glass that had a black powder in it, this he opened and took a little twig from a tree and put it into the glass and took out some of the powder and touched the bark of the tree therewith, and immediately the tree began to wither and within an hour was wholly blasted: when he had done this, seeing some swans lie sleeping near that place, he laid some of the powder upon them, and they presently start up, fell a staggering and so died, and within a little space their bodies were compressed into a kind of jelly.

Now by the way Sir Ed had observed the Italian to lay some money under each of the swans, what he might suppose them to be worth. And when they were come home, Sir Ed fell to arguing with Dr Dee about what had passed, and told him he did believe this Italian had the elixir, and therefore if he would be ruled by him they would go to the Italian and tell him unless he would communicate some good secret to them, they would apprehend him upon suspicion for being sent from Rome to poison the chancellor of Prague or some other eminent person. This being concluded on, Sir Ed was to make enquiry after his lodging, and having at length found him out, told the Italian that from the high secret he had showed them before Dr Dee had an intent to inform the chancellor of Prague that he supposed he was sent to poison him, or do some other notable mischief, which he hearing of could not but (out of that great affection he bore to him as one that was master of so eminent secrets, part of which he was pleased to let him be witness of) give him notice of this plot, and to wish him to provide for his safety.

The Italian apprehended this as a real truth and with much thankfulness told Sir Ed he would immediately leave Prague, and if he would follow him to such a place in Poland, he would there acquaint him with such things as should requite this large favour and if he found him not there, yet he would leave a note where he should come to him.

Sir Ed upon this goes into Poland, and there meets with this Italian, who not only told him the full and whole of the secret of the stone, but also gave him a large quantity of his powder. And by this means Sir Ed Kelly told his pursuivant he came by it. And this very story the pursuivant told my Father Bacchus (William Backhouse), who told it to me. And showed him also the diamond which he made of a flint stone.

But, Ashmole added later, this relation is wholly confuted by the book and actions with angels written by Dr Dee and since that time come to light.

12

Ashmole preserved another story of how Dee and Kelly came by the secret of making the philosopher's stone that William Lilly the astrologer recorded in 1667. There is no reason to believe this story either.

Dr Dee was studious in chemistry, and attained to good perfection therein, but his servant or rather companion Kelly outwent him, viz. about the elixir or philosopher's stone: which neither Kelly nor Dee obtained by their own labour and industry. It was in this manner Kelly obtained it, as I had it related from an ancient minister, who knew the certainty thereof from an old English merchant resident in Germany at what time both Kelly and Dee were there.

Dee and Kelly being in the confines of the Emperor's dominions in a city where resided

many English merchants, with whom they had much familiarity, there happened an old friar to come to Dr Dee's lodgings, knocking at the door; Dee peeped down the stairs; 'Kelly, tell the old man I am not at home.'

Kelly did so.

The friar said, 'I will take another time to wait upon him.'

Some few days after he came again. Dee ordered Kelly, if it were the same person to deny him again. He did so at which the friar was very angry.

'Tell your master I came to speak with him and to do him good, because he is a great scholar and famous, but now tell him, he put forth a book and dedicated it to the Emperor, it is called *Monas Hieroglyphica*, he does not understand it, I wrote it myself, I came to instruct him therein, and in some more profound things, do you Kelly come along with me, I will make you more famous than your master Dee.'

Kelly was very apprehensive of what the friar delivered, and thereupon suddenly retired from Dee, and wholly applied unto the friar, and of him either had the elixir ready made, or the perfect method of its preparation and making; the poor friar lived a very short time after, whether he died of a natural death or was otherwise poisoned or made away by Kelly, the merchant who related this did not certainly know.

13

These speculations about the secret of the elixir are perhaps premature. Perhaps the secret had yet to be revealed. Certainly through the following weeks Dee still complained about their financial difficulties.

'Oh lord, what prevails us that we are born? or what prevails us that we have heard of the mysteries and promises most merciful of the highest, as concerning our election, if the lord will not help us in our great frailty and misery? Where shall we become on the face of the earth?'

And Kelly still remained sceptical. 'Lord, if it be your will, seeing he is so hard to give credit to your holy messages without some proof in work first passed: as for example this doctrine of the philosopher's stone: that so he may come to be allowed, though he imitate Thomas Dydimus in his hard and slow belief, or credit given to your ministers in this action, lord, proceed in this that he may perceive your power and mercies.'

'Shall a dark cellar brag or boast of her beauty because she receives light and clearness by a candle brought into or shining into her?' Kelly was asked. 'No more can you, for the ripeness of your wit and understanding is through the presence of us and our illumination. But if we depart you shall become a dark cellar, and shall think too well of yourself in vain. Matter is

lacking amongst you, the fire cannot continue, but when you bring more wood you shall have more fire.'

As for Laski, they were told, 'I see and look around but I do not see Laski.'

'Oh lord, what is this, what is this, oh lord?' asked Dee.

'Satan has placed his dwelling in his heart and he has neglected the commands of God.'

'If Laski fall, upon whom so much of our worldly doings is grounded, as the housekeeping still in Kraków hired for a year, etc., how shall we supply the wants etc.?'

And Kelly was rebuked for failing to make confession.

'Therefore you are a liar, Edward Kelly, when you say, "I fear God, I love God, I intend to live well and in obedience," for you do not follow his commandments, you fly from him, therefore you are not with him. But I hear you saying, "I confess myself to Christ before the throne of Christ."'

Kelly confessed that he thought so at this instant.

'But you have not offered yourself to the priest, nor laid down your sacrifice.'

14

Saturday, February 23, 1585, 2 p.m.

The occasion of this coming to the show stone was that as we sat together in the stove, the heated study, there was a pat or stroke or two, not natural, given on the bench and wall, and I felt on my head a heavy moving thing, and also after that Kelly felt on his back as if someone had written letters distinctly. Whereupon we went to understand the will of God, as being half warned and stirred by these tokens.

It was Madini.

'Why should I speak to you since you have no faith?' she asked. 'Why should I teach you who despise my documents? I knock in vain for you do not hear me. Shall I close my mouth because of your wickedness? Or shall I open my mouth because my mother has commanded me? I will go back and will desire that my mouth may be sewn up with a double thread, for assure yourself I will not come again willingly.'

She went away and Dee and Kelly 'argued after our former manner, Kelly as he was wont and I still in my constant hope of God's mercies.'

After half an hour she returned, warning of imprisonment conspired against Dee.

'Envious minds and false hearts hunt after you and they have said and have conspired. But I have said to them, be it to them as they have measured to others, and that which they have nourished in comers, let it be fire and consume their dwelling places.'

We gathered that some treachery was devised against me, Dee records. But a way of escape was prepared by Laski, 'which part of the north you must always look to and be directed by.'

Madini consulted with her mother again and then told them, 'Both of you, or, if you will be distracted, one of you, go secretly from here and speedily to Laski. So shall it come to pass that he whom they intend to imprison, saying, "We will compel him to perform his word, lest he peradventure triumph elsewhere against us," may at last open the prison doors for them and salute a strange king, even in the selfsame place where they shall eat tomorrow's dinner. But when they perceive that you are gone, then they will understand that you knew and that the spirit of God was amongst you. If these words be true,' she said, 'bear witness of the truth. If you think them to be false, you need not follow them.'

'How soon would you advise me to be going hence?' Dee asked. 'You see how bare I am of money.'

'Do so as in imminent danger. I have spoken the last word.'

On the road again.

15

Two days later, Monday, February 25, as he sat at the table Kelly felt as if someone had written on his back. They took out the show stone.

'Here is Madimi,' said Kelly.

'You have vowed to yourselves and to the lord,' she said, 'perform your vows. That which God commands, do. Excuse yourselves with men, and gird up your garments for travel. Not in a wagon but on horseback.'

'I pray you, give us some instruction of my Lord Laski's being,' asked Kelly.

'Travel from here directly to Wratislavia, and there I will meet you,' said Madimi.

'I pray you, deal openly with us according to our frail state, and declare to us my Lord Laski's estate.'

'You do not depend upon Laski, but Laski depends upon you. If he does evil, his punishment is ready. If he does well, he does it for himself. I am greater than and my eye stretches further than yours. Even if you went tomorrow you have lost some days.'

'I must carry my books with me, we must be at least three horses,' said Dee.

'Not so, but you shall hide them.'

'Am I to return here again before my wife comes from here?'

'I am not flesh nor do I move or am moved with flesh. But if you fulfil the first, the rest

follows. Do this as though you committed theft.' Secretly and speedily, Dee noted. 'For if the hours are diminished the purpose shall also want success. You have been led; follow if you wish. The hand is open and ready to take hold of you, what more, therefore, shall I say to you?'

'What hand, I pray you?' Dee asked.

'Clasping hands, not seizing,' said Madimi.

'Lord, I do not understand that either,' said Dee.

But she was gone without any further explanation.

Two days later, Wednesday February 27, Dee, Kelly and Thomas Kelly as servant rode to Limburg, otherwise named Nymburk, six miles from Prague, on the way towards Bressel (otherwise named Wratislavia, now Bratislava).

16

Thursday, February 28, 1585, Limburg.

I had arranged for the horses to be attended to at four in the morning, Dee records, so as by five, or as soon as it was break of day, we might be riding. In the meantime Kelly still lay in bed, awake, and I was in the next chamber, ordering things of my male.

Kelly heard a voice like mine say 'D', at which he asked me, 'What did you say?'

I answered that I said nothing. Then he doubted what creature used that voice.

Afterwards he rose and when he had been ready a while, he said that he felt something crawling, or as if someone was writing on his back, and at length ascending into his head. And so I left him, Dee records, and went out into another place and knelt to pray, and prayed, and upon Thomas Kelly's coming into that room where I knelt, in the door of a little open gallery over the street, I rose up and went in again to E. K. and he told me that he slumbered because of the heaviness of his head, and that he seemed to see me praying and Michael standing by me.

I answered that it was true I had been somewhat bent to prayer, but that I could not pray as I would, etc.

At this immediately he saw Michael over my head with a pen in his hand. Thereupon I was resolved that I was to write something of importance, and I made speed to take pen, ink and paper and to settle myself to writing, because we made haste to ride, intending to ride eight or nine miles that day, and company waiting for us, one of them being a Jew whose sister is wife to Dr Salomon of Prague, the Jew, etc. And going about to attend for something to write, a voice said, 'Why do you not enclose yourself to hear my voice?'

At this I shut all the doors and outside doors.

'In a receptacle that truth may be better attested to.'

Hereupon I speedily took out the show stone and put it on the table before E. K. A white circle appeared round the border of the stone, very bright, and a globe of fire in the middle.

Madini appeared and then Michael with his sword.

‘These are the words of the lord and of me his angel and minister of truth and they follow,’ he said. ‘Behold, I have led you forth several times and you have obeyed me. Therefore I say to you, be now stewards of more. In you, Dee, I delight,’ he continued, ‘and because you have obeyed me and not of force of human persuasions, I show you what is to come and what I would have you do and why you come here.’

‘May it be the will of God,’ said Dee.

‘Cover me for a while lest you see I am beyond the ability of your capacity and so do not return easily.’

I did not understand this saying, nor did Kelly, Dee records.

‘He becomes very bright,’ said Kelly.

‘I say to you cover the receptacle,’ Michael repeated.

We covered the stone a while and read what had been said.

‘He is brighter than he was,’ said Kelly, ‘and the circle of light still shines.’

We uncovered the stone and he spoke again.

‘Before twelve months of your account be finished with the sun, I will keep my promise with you concerning the destruction of Rudolf lest peradventure he triumphs, as he often does. For your lines are many times perused by him, saying, “This man doted, where is become his God or his good angels?” And behold I will sweep him off the face of the earth and he shall perish miserably, that he may understand that you dealt not for yourself but fulfilled the work of your master. Moreover, I will bring in, even in the second month, the twelve ended, Stephen.’

István – Stephen – Báthory had been elected king of Poland in 1575.

‘And for a truth, as I am, will place him in the imperial seat. He shall possess an empire most great, and shall show what it is to govern when God places. In his time I will fulfil many things that I have promised you and I will be merciful to you because you have not broken my covenant. My mind abhors Laski for he is neither faithful to me nor to you, nor does he care for his own soul.’

And then he gave some details of the plots against Dee.

‘The speedy return of Kurz was to deliberate with Rudolf how they might entangle you under the cover of justice. And he whom you fostered and fed at your table is he who has wet his hand in the dish with you and has delivered you. Moreover, he has betrayed his master, and

the cause of his adversity has had its chief root in him. From the third year he has done unjustly, and has made naked his Lord's secrets. But he shall have his reward and shall perish with his own hand.'

Emeric Sontag, Dee noted in the margin. Dr Hájek's servant.

'Before you came out of your own doors to take your journey, Rudolf knew of your going. And for a truth his letters are before you. Therefore, it behoves me to give you warning and to teach and instruct you as one exercised in my business. Cover me, I am become clearer.'

We covered the receptacle, Dee records. After a while we uncovered it.

'This therefore you shall do. The same way you came the same way you shall also return, not to fly from their malice or tyranny but to stand in the face of them as my servant. Hereby, indirectly, shall the traitor understand you know him. And I will stir up Rudolf's hard heart with indignation against him. For he shall be construed a liar. And they shall begin to fear you and also to love you, and you shall be in favour amongst them. Annuate their doings and hear their sayings. And do not refuse those things they will offer you. I will send one out to pay them their wages. Moreover I command you, Kelly (but in my own person I counsel and advertise you) that you take part with the Lord Jesus, and go forward with the business you have in hand.'

Belike he was studying in Dunstan's book and tables of which he made me not privy, Dee remarks.

Dunstan's book was the alchemical manuscript Kelly had found. The recent visions certainly suggest alchemical preoccupations.

'For why? They shall shortly be made open and plain. Lest your word receive foil in the hearts of men.'

'He means your word to the Emperor,' Kelly explained to Dee.

'But I do not bind it to that place. For the fruit that springs from it shall do my service with Stephen; and yet, if he will, with that unjust Laski. And it shall be a garden for you, in which you shall borrow not from the world but the gift of God.

Finally Michael told Dee, 'When therefore you come home, do not hide yourself, but see that the infant be regenerated.'

Dee's infant son Michael was about to be baptised.

'As concerning the godfathers,' Dee asked, 'shall I request and use such as I intended?'

'Do as you have done,' he was told. 'But put all these things up amongst the secrets of your hearts, as though not seeing, yet seeing all things. Let these for this time cease.'

Hereupon we had great comfort, and so brake our fast and returned to Prague again before

four in the afternoon.

17

While I was thus out and had left a letter for Balthasar Federic ab Ossa to deal with the Spanish ambassador, the Lord Rumpf, and Herr Kinski, to crave pardon of my sudden departure and the child not yet christened, and had given my wife charge not to deliver the letter before Friday night, Dee records, it came to pass that this Mr Balthasar had sent word of his coming to Prague with Lord Kinski (whom on the Friday before I had met riding out of town and he told me that he was to be out three or four days) and that he was desirous to speak to me. Upon which occasion my wife thought it best to send the letters to him, and did so not long before my coming home. Which when I heard I was half sorry for it and immediately sent word to Mr Balthasar of my coming home and to certify him that my wife had erred to send that letter unto his worship before Friday night when she might perceive that indeed I did ride forth to Bressel. At this he was desirous to speak with me and I received my letter from him which he had perused and offered himself most ready to satisfy the contents of it.

Now to the chief purpose. At my return home from Mr Balthasar Federic ab Ossa, I found Emeric Sontag in my wife's stove with Mr Kelly, who at the sight of me was sore amazed, and half unable or unwilling to speak, but said, 'You are expert horsemen.'

Then Mr Kelly told me that Emeric had told him that the Emperor had all day yesterday been very melancholic and would speak with nobody. And that he knew of my journey in a moment when it was by the Jews, especially by the doctor's son who had gone about to get me the four horses, and laboured very much with himself, unasked, to persuade me that the Emperor's first and chief understanding of it was by the Jews. At this, being now night, he went home.

The entire episode remains mysterious. The atmosphere around Dee and Kelly was undoubtedly fraught with plots and suspicions. Their sudden departure and return may appear a paranoid response to something never clearly defined, but that is not to say that they did not have good reason for their behaviour. Certainly they were being directed to go by spirits, but it may be that spirits can be paranoid too, and appropriately so at that.

18

Thursday, March 14, at 2.30 in the afternoon, Michael Dee was baptised in the great chapel of the castle in Prague. Performing the baptism was the chaplain of his Imperial Majesty.

The godfathers being the illustrious lord Lord Guillén de San Clemente, ambassador to the Emperor of the King of Spain, and the magnificent Lord Rumpf, principal chamberlain of the Imperial Majesty and the intimate and leading member of the privy council.

The godmother was the noble woman the Lady Dietrichstein, beloved wife of the Lord Dietrichstein, who is his Majesty's High Steward.

The child was named Michael at my request, Dee records, because of the gracious memory of the blessed Michael who (by the mercy of God) gave us such kindness, help and guidance.

It is a mark of Dee's reputation and status that he was able to have the baptism in the castle, and with such powerful sponsors. He had already established good relationships with the Spanish ambassador. Now he had made contact with two other powerful families. Marguerite de Cordona, Lady Dietrichstein, was the Spanish wife of Adam, Lord Dietrichstein who was High Steward at the court, the most important of the senior court dignitaries. Wolf Rumpf von Wullross, chamberlain at the court, was to become High Steward upon Dietrichstein's death in 1590, until Rudolf dismissed him in a fit of rage ten years later. A powerful *eminence grise*, he too was close to Spain. He was a man of learning and possessed a large library – not as large as Dee's, but nonetheless a catalogue made in 1583 records over 1,000 volumes in all fields, with music especially represented.

19

March 20, 3.30 p.m.

As we sat together in my study and talked of our affairs and of the philosopher's stone, Dee records, E. K. felt a thing heavy upon his head and heard a voice saying, 'I will teach you.' At this I set the stone in place.

'Here is Levanael, covered as he was wont,' said Kelly. 'He seems to have had his lips sewed for the veil is so thin that it permits his face to be perfectly discerned.'

'Why are you not pure that you may learn?' Levanael asked.

'I pray you to deal with another,' said Kelly. 'Here is John, a boy in the house, you may use him.'

'Your talk is human folly,' said Levanael. 'But before I go I will not be hidden from you. Read your lesson, it is now a stale lesson.'

Dee read, 'Take common audcal ... etc.' through to 'Take hold.'

'You are best to do so,' said Levanael.

'Now he has heaved up his veil, his face is bare, it was not his lips that had those stitches

but his veil, his face is a very fair, beautiful face.'

'We beseech you for God's sake, glory and honour to give light and to make plain this lesson or conclusion.'

Their ability to produce the philosopher's stone, they were told, would give them influence and access. 'For if you say, "Lo, these things has God taught me and these things has God opened to me," while they wonder at the one they shall be forced to believe the other.'

The divers commodities of the philosopher's stone known, noted Dee.

'Moreover they shall leave their table talks which object poverty unto you and they shall be forced to say, even in despite of their teeth, "What need had he of us? He sought us not of the world for lo he leads her as his slave."'

He disappeared for a while and then ordered them, 'Read.'

Dee read the recipe.

'What is audcal?' asked Levanael.

'God knows, I don't,' said Dee.

'It is gold,' said Levanael.

'Purge and work it,' said Dee. 'How you purge it I do not know.'

'Read and go forward,' said Levanael.

Dee read.

'Dlasod is sulphur,' said Levanael. 'Go on, let me teach you generally.'

'Take also lulo of red roxtan.'

'Roxtan is pure and simple wine in herself. Lulo is her mother.'

'There may be great ambiguity in these words,' said Dee.

'Lulo is tartar, simply, of red wine. Audcal is his mercury.'

He said before it was gold, Dee wrote in the margin.

'Darr in the angelical tongue is the true name of the stone.'

We know that the philosopher's stone is in metal, with metal and on metal, wrote Dee.

'How many letters are in audcal?' Levanael asked.

'Six,' said Dee.

'So many ways is this a working,' said Levanael.

And then he was gone.

Did they finally have a recipe for transmuting base metal into gold? Did they have the recipe, but not the necessary materials? Certainly they had not yet produced any wealth, for they were in deep financial distress. Laski had not paid Kelly his pension, long overdue. And Dee was yet again impoverished.

20

Thursday, March 21, 1585.

My wife being in great perplexity for want of money requested E. K. and me that the effect of the annexed petition might be propounded to God and his good angels to give answer or counsel in the cause, Dee records. Hereupon I prayed a little to the same purpose and read the petition.

‘We desire God of his great and infinite mercies to grant us the help of these heavenly mercies that we may by them be directed how or by whom to be aided or relieved, in this necessity that we are in, of sufficient and needful provision, for meat and drink for us and our family, wherewith we stand at this instant much oppressed: and the rather because that might be hurtful to us and the credit of the actions wherein we are vowed and linked unto his heavenly Majesty, by the ministry and comfort of his holy angels, to lay such things as are the ornaments of our house and the coverings of our bodies in pawn either unto such as are rebels against his divine majesty, the Jews, or the people of this city, which are malicious and full of wicked slanders. I, Jane Dee, humbly request this thing of God, acknowledging myself his servant and handmaiden, to whom I commit my body and soul.’

Kelly looked into the stone.

‘Here is one with a leather coat and a spade, with a white coronet on his head round; he has a bag on one side of him and on the other side a bottle, it seems like a husbandman, but he is a young, fair man.’

The leather coated figure spoke.

‘Jane Dee, give ear unto me, you woman, is it not written that women do not come into the synagogue, much less ought they to come before the testimony of the will of God to be fulfilled mightily, and to come against the world and against the pomp, for money and iniquity; but because you have humbled yourself and have refused to tarry before me, as it becomes you, I will answer to your infirmities and will talk with you.

‘He that has his house hemmed in with a ditch which is deep and swollen with water must needs make a bridge over it that he may be at liberty, otherwise he is a prisoner to the waters. But if he lacks wood and is not able to enter into the fields, is it not wisdom to break his dining

tables and to set himself free. Why do you cry to me? Behold, let your house yield and the covering of your body give place to the necessity of hunger. Behold God often suffers his elect and chosen vessels to be without mansion or apparel, but lo he feeds the sparrows.

‘But I will not reprehend you because your soul is frail, but be faithful and obedient and that truly as you are yoked. Behold I have blessed your children and from your seed and bones I will build anew and they shall have houses and shall be served of such as the people salute, saying, “Hail master.”

‘Consider that tomorrow does not come before it is brought in, nor can you have until your power comes. But cast up your eyes and hope for better things. Since I cannot give you what you desire, yet I bow my head and so I counsel you. Let your husband arise and gird himself together and let him take his eyes with him and let him haste out of this place. For I think they dissemble. Let him stand before Stephen and let him visit Laski, perhaps he will find him not living. But if he lives he is dead. There you shall see that I will relieve you and do good to him, and will bind up the jaws of the persecutor, that he may go in.

‘You are a woman and your infirmities follow you. I do not counsel without a cause, nor did I stir you up to speak. But for your faith I will reward you. But one storm is to come, take it patiently, you shall be the whiter and nearer. Cast away your murmuring and sweep your houses, take heed of spiders and of the whore rat. This is the first time that I have answered to this kind in the latter days.’

‘Lord,’ said Dee, ‘it was said to us as a watchword, when Stephen’s messengers should come for us, that then we should go. Now his messengers have not yet come.’

‘If the bridegroom invites you himself, why do you need his servant?’

‘Now the difficulty for money is greater,’ said Dee, ‘for if we had tarried together less money would have served than it will do now.’

‘You have asked counsel, I have counselled you. If it please you, hear me. It shall be well with you if you stay, but much better if you go.’

21

Lack of money was only one of the difficulties they were currently facing. Dee complains of ill health. And he was also becoming entangled in various traps and plots. Seven years later, in the *Compendious Rehearsal* of his life, he wrote an enigmatic paragraph about the events of this time.

‘I sent very dutifully, humbly and faithfully out of Bohemia (anno 1585) letters unto her sacred Majesty requesting an expert, discreet, and trusty man to be sent to me into Bohemia, to

hear and see what God had sent to me and my friends there at that time; at which time, and till which time, I was chief governor of our philosophical proceedings; and by both our consents there was somewhat prepared and determined upon to have been sent to her Majesty, if the required messenger had been sent by her Majesty to us. But not long after (so soon as it was perceived that my faithful letters were not regarded therein) by little and little I became hindered and crossed to perform my dutiful and chief desire: and that by the fine and most subtle devices and plots laid, first by the Bohemians, and somewhat by the Italians, and lastly by some of my own countrymen. God best knows how I was very ungodly dealt with all, when I meant all truth, sincerity, fidelity and piety towards God and my Queen and country.'

Dee wrote to Queen Elizabeth in March and again in November 1585. Was he was asking for an expert to whom he could reveal their progress in producing the philosopher's stone? Were their alchemical experiments now under way? Or was there political information he had obtained that he wanted to transmit? Prague was a site of Jesuit and other Catholic activities directed against Protestant England. Philip Sidney had met Edmund Campion there in 1577. Campion had been executed on his ill-fated return to England in 1581. But other Catholic activists continued to make plans, and plots continued to be hatched, and monitored. Or if they weren't hatched, they could be fabricated by informers and provocateurs and government agents.

22

Wednesday, March 27, 1585.

E K. came to me and asked me for the circle, or a copy of it, which was shown to him at Oxford and which he had written out, or described by the light that was shown to him by the spiritual creature.

There is no mention in the records of any visit to Oxford, though Kelly would have passed through it on his way between Blockley and London. Does the mention here refer to Kelly's attendance at the University, something that has been suggested, but for which no firm evidence has been found?

He intended, as he said, to show it to a Jesuit and to ask his counsel of it, having a great misliking of our spiritual friends, saying that they were the great devils; and so the letter that he dealt with before gave place to them, etc.

At this, Dee records, I told him I would ask our friends' counsel, before I delivered anything of theirs to their enemy.

He wanted to have it immediately, and with great threats, most terrible and dangerous to

me, he willed me to deliver it straightaway.

I being occupied with writing a letter to her Majesty the Queen, said as soon as I had leisure I would give it him. He said he would wait for my leisure. I told him that would scarcely be this week, I had so many letters to write. He thereupon grew in such a rage that he said I should not pass one foot beyond him before I delivered it to him.

At length he rose to shut the door of the study upon me. I rose and went after him and took him by the shoulders to keep him from the door, and called aloud to my folks, 'Come here, here is violence offered to me,' whereupon they all came in and my wife. And so afterwards, by degrees his fury assuaged, my folks, my wife and his went away. And after he had sat two or three hours with me he saw, as I sat writing, Michael with a sword stand on my head, and willed him to speak, which he forbore to do for more than a quarter of an hour.

'Now answer me to the purpose,' said Kelly, 'whether I shall have the circle of letters I desire?'

Michael began a long speech. 'Will you permit one man, one soul to be thus carried with Satan to the dishonouring and treading underfoot of you, and your light and truth?'

'For what end does he say all this?' Kelly asked.

Michael continued regardless. In the future, he told him 'you shall not be spared as you have been.'

Then he delivered a parable.

23

'The forester came and said to himself, "The force of this wind is great, see this young tree beats himself in pieces against the greater, I will go home and will bring my ground instruments and will eradicate him and I will place him further off. Then if the winds come he shall have room to move."

'But when he came home the lord of the wood seeing him in readiness with his mattock and spade asked him where he was going, and he told his master. But lo, his master rebuked him and said:

““When there are no winds they increase; they are not hurtful to each other. Leave them therefore. When the young tree takes roots in some years, his roots will link themselves with and under the roots of the greater. Then, though the winds come, they will not be hurtful to each other but will stand so much the firmer, the more they are wrapped together. Yea, when the old tree withers, he shall be a strength to him and will add to his age as much as he has added to his youth.”

‘And he ceased to dig.

’Therefore do not be torn apart, nor be offended with each other. If you break the yoke that you are in and run astray, he that errs shall perish, and he that stands shall be desolate. The angry driver continues not with one, but he shall return home and shall not see the end of the harvest.

‘Love one another therefore and comfort one another. For he that comforts his brother comforts himself: and when one is weary, let the other draw. For you are men and not yet crowned. The first is paid, so is the tenth also: even so the tree that is grafted bears fruit sooner than that which grows from the seed. Notwithstanding, both have their place in the orchard. The night let that yield to the day, and winter bear rule over summer. Let youth yield to ripe years. Solomon says it is good for that young man that obeys the counsel of his elder ...

‘Therefore in things that are to be done, let the doer occupy the superiority. The seer, let him see and look after the doings of him that he sees. For you are but one body in this work.’

24

As concerning my letters and business into England, I thought good to ask counsel what I were best to do with the letters to the Queen and others, Dee records.

‘Gather out of the book of Enoch the seal and angel of your country, deal with him,’ said Michael.

I found a door in the name due to Britannia, anno 15.

‘You shall easily find the truth by their appearing, for one does not answer to the other’s function.’

‘But as concerning the manner how to practice that book, I would gladly hear something,’ said Dee.

‘They are his, they speak his,’ said Michael.

‘I understand this to be required at his hands who gave us that book,’ said Dee.

‘Poland awaits you, and who is has gone before.’

‘As concerning helping my health,’ said Dee, ‘may I stay here yet eight days, and then make speed to be going towards Poland as was prescribed to me?’

‘I can concede to your days, seven,’ said Michael. ‘If you knew what I see you would not go, you would run. He who is before is a gardener and he knows the virtues of herbs. But the eighth day I will be there also.’

‘Where? And which eighth day?’

‘The eighth day from today I will be in Kraków . I have told you plainly.’

‘May I then stay seven days before I set forth on my journey?’

‘You can and you cannot,’ said Michael. ‘You have your own judgement granted you by which you may do it. But in respect of the necessity that requires you there, you cannot.’

‘I beseech you not to be offended if I ask the cause of the Lord Laski,’ said Dee.

There was silence, and a long delay.

‘Why did you not speak now?’ Kelly asked.

‘Behold,’ said Michael, ‘he has said to himself, and those that are wicked have whispered to him, secretly it seems that they despise me, and obstinately, because he has not received letters from you, he uses this silence. Moreover, he has not done as God commanded him. But I will give him you, use him as you will.’

25

Monday, April 1, 1585.

Dee noted down: A remembrance for me. England letters. A. Laski’s letters opened and some still kept. Emeric’s traitorous dealing to be deciphered. Counsel for the manner of our going and what things shall be needful to take with us.

There appeared a tall man with white clothes, with wide sleeves, and his garment very much pleated, and a thing like a black cypress scarf before his face, which had been doubled many times, and with a knot behind him.

‘When the lord bade you go, if you had done so and had not taken your own time, more had been given to him and more had been added to you. But now letters came that have passed through the hands of sodomites and murderers, through whose hands they are accursed, you rejoice, you receive comfort, you determine to go.’

Note my great offence, wrote Dee. Laski’s letters came last Friday.

‘But if you had left those letters behind you, had come when I bade you go, then had my name been untouched. Therefore the lord is angry and does not forget this offence.’

After this we sat and considered and perceived and confessed the greatness of our offence, how it much concerned the honour and glory of God. If we had gone without receiving advertisement of those letters, so should they hear and King Stephen have perceived that we had the direction of God and of his good angels, and not to have depended upon man’s letters or persuasions. We both alike confessed this great misdoing and so framed ourselves to make all speed away that we possibly could.

‘He is here,’ said Kelly, ‘and said, “Be shut for twenty days” and pulled a thing like a curtain around the stone and the stone seemed to be full of the same substance, like the froth of

the sea, yet hanging or joining together like curds of a posset.' A posset was a drink of hot milk, curdled with ale or wine or other liquor.

26

Friday, April 5, Dee records, I took my journey from Prague toward Kraków, God be our good speed. E. K., I, Thomas Kelly and Hugh Brycket my servants.

The departure from Prague to Kraków is another episode that is not explained. There were certainly dangers in Prague that Dee may have been trying to escape. Or it may have been that finding he was not getting further access to Rudolf, he determined to try to approach King Stephen for support. Originally Dee had planned to have returned to England by May, 1585; he had arranged with his brother-in-law, he writes in the *Compendious Rehearsal*, to be away one year and eight months. But now in April 1585 his plans must have changed, for he insisted on repossessing the house he had leased in Kraków.

Friday, April 12. At midday we came to Kraków and as we were within an English mile of the city, being a fair and calm day, there passed about half a mile before us, crossing from the right hand to the left, whirlwinds, several, one after another, wreathing up the dust with great vehemency on high and shooting forward still and then mounting into the air, and so went southerly from us, and likewise some began on the right hand and came furiously, raising up and wreathing the dust up into the air southerly also and did not cross the way.

When we came to our house we found that a stranger was put in by the landlords (Mr John Long, the judge, and Martin Platner). Having with me the keys of the storehouse and of the street door I had my stuff brought with me put in, and that night we made hard shift for lodging. But the new and forced in tenants gave me leave to have one of my bedsteads, which was in one stove, and emptied the same to us with much ado.

Saturday and Sunday we were sore outfaced or rather threatened that we should have no other house there. And also one Bonar's arms were set upon the door as if the house had been allowed to him *ex officio*.

Monday, I made the Rector privy of the injuries I had endured and he courteously sent two masters of art with me to the proconsul to have citation for the landlords to appear on Tuesday by seven o'clock to answer our complaint. This Monday night the Lord Laski came from Laško upon a letter he had received from me from Nysa of my coming.

Tuesday, the Lord Laski came to the house and in the morning would have immediately cast all their stuff out of doors, but by entreaty he permitted them to empty all into the lower stove.

In the meantime I appeared with my lawyer or attorney Mr Tedaldo, an Italian, an ancient practitioner in the Polish and Krakovian causes: and to conclude, I had a decree against my landlords that I was to have at least a half year's warning. Whereupon John Long gave me warning to leave at Michaelmas.

That was in six month's time, the necessary half year's warning. John Long clearly wanted Dee out.

And so we came from the court or townhouse, called *praetorium* in Latin.

This same Tuesday afternoon my Lord Laski went up into the castle to the King of Poland and told him of my coming and how evilly I was treated, and he said, 'Why did he not cast them out of doors?'

'So I have now,' said the Lord Laski.

And the king granted the house to be held *ex officio*, and the next day the king was desirous to speak with me.

28

Wednesday, April 17 Dee went with Laski to King Stephen.

Stephen was known to be 'extremely eloquent, conversing customarily in Latin with everyone,' a contemporary chronicler, Reinhold Heidenstein has recorded. 'His every word was so weighed that often he would assume an oracular quality.'

Dee was no less oracular. 'Consolation, peace and the mercy of God be to you, oh most serene king, with whom I have received from above the admonition that I should maintain myself which I do now most basely; prepared with all fidelity and sincerity to treat your royal Majesty things enjoined on me from above, the accounts of which mysteries to relate as the occasion will be given I shall not refuse to cover, and all other matters which I shall judge to be pleasing to God and your Majesty.'

'Just as I have heard many good things of you absent, so your coming is now particularly pleasing to me,' Stephen replied; 'and if there is anything in which my grace and favour can be of benefit to you, I shall not fail to show myself your patron and protector: and concerning these and other greater matters there will be some more convenient time of speaking after these festal days, at which time I shall see that you are summoned to me.'

Meanwhile, in the political arena, relations between King Stephen and the Sejm, the assembly of the nobility, had broken down. Stephen had plans for an attack on Constantinople, and, after the death of the Tsar Ivan the Terrible, the formation of a federation of Poland, Lithuania, Hungary and Muscovy. But the Sjem was not persuaded; the Zborowski faction

continued to oppose Stephen, and the last meeting in 1585 ended with no taxes voted. Stephen fell into a deep depression and withdrew from Kraków to Niepolomice, shunning his wife and the court. On 15 May he had made his will, denouncing the Poles for their ingratitude and bequeathing most of his wealth to his native Transylvania. It was in this context that Dee was granted audience to deliver his divine message.

29

Niepolomice, in the court of the king of Poland, May 23, 1585, 6 p.m., Dee records, the king sent for the Lord Laski and me by his vice-chamberlain, whom we came unto in a chamber within the chamber or room where he gives audience or eats with his palatines and others. He sat by the window which is toward the south, and by which his prospect is into his new garden, which is being made.

He began thus, the Lord Laski being by and thereto willed by the king:

‘The Lord Palatine persuaded me that I should hear you about these great and rare things, which I gladly do. Nevertheless this must be considered, that all the prophets and revelations at long last came to an end in the time of Christ. Nevertheless there is nothing in these things against the honour of God, and indeed I do not doubt but that God can in many ways entrust certain secrets to men now in this present time.’

Dee replied at length with arguments that there could still be revelations and prophets after the time of Christ. At considerable length. Stephen was clearly interested in what could be revealed. He may not have needed this long justification.

Four days later, at seven in the morning, May 27, a spiritual session was held with the King and Laski present. Dee began with prayers.

‘Omnipotent, eternal, true and one God, oh thou my merciful father who through your good angels warned me about the deadly malice conceived against me, and by those angels again bade me depart thence with my wife, children and my household, and as we departed you freed us, as by a miracle, from the perils of the sea, and who hastened our escape from the various hands of murderers and heretics, and who in many ways, partly known to us and partly unknown, saved us from the danger of death ...

‘Therefore on account of your great and admirable mercy we must acknowledge most humbly that immortal praises and thanks are owed by us to you oh mightiest God, who has joined us to this your Laski; a man devoted to the Catholic religion and the implacable enemy of every anti-Christian, then oh most wise, powerful and excellent God and my father who with your royal, great and wonderful undertakings soon to be begun at length has found Stephen,

your future man of war, to whom in honour and obedience to your commands we should show the divine mysteries ...’

The prayer returned once more to evidence of divine prophecies since the time of Christ. And then Stephen was promised ‘future actions in which your royal majesty, if you think fit, may be involved in person. And of the twenty-four books of our past actions, I am prepared, whenever it pleases your serene majesty, to display them. Certain of which are in Latin, others in Greek, others in the English language, but they are for the most part English accounts of the actions of Englishmen, viz., instructions of good men, admonitions, exhortations, prophecies, revelations, made to us over a period of almost three years, received and annotated by us.’

It was part prayer, part invocation, and part a history and justification of their activities, as much for the ears of King Stephen as for God. Then the session with the stone began. Kelly spoke.

‘Now I see a man dressed in white robes with a long face and with scattered hair drawn up and as if in waves, and his right foot standing on a great round stone and the left on the water and behind his back a great light. Now I see the earth beneath his feet but as if in the air. The course of the water which is towards the west seems to be far from me; when I look on his face there appear to be sometimes three faces confused together.

‘I hear a great voice saying, “Come and see.”’

‘Another globe descends to him, a fiery globe, with a face standing out, and from its body a kind of rod made of a reed appears to emanate.

‘Measurement,’ the voice said. ‘I have measured and the seal is fifty-two. And behold I am full of justice and mercy. Do you wish that you should open my mouth? And why, says the lord, should I punish Stephen?’

‘I utter a word, being sent by the most high. Wherefore, stir yourself and diligently hear, oh Stephen. Who nourished you from your cradle? Who nourished the labours of your ways?’

These things were said word by word in Latin, Dee noted. Note that this reprehension of King Stephen began in Latin from this speech.

‘Did he measure the temerity of your youth from the force of judgement and of time? Who reads you? From where are you provided with heavenly comeliness. Who was responsible for this living soul in you, intelligent and full of salt? Was it not the king of glory to whom all power is subject in heaven and in earth? Who raising you with powerful arm from soldierhood called you from great to greater to the greatest? Was it not the same who both calls and comes to you? And who about himself before the ages said, “I am”? Why therefore have you put such a dark cloud shrouded with such a black fog of, may I say, ingratitude between your God and

your soul? Is it that you have what you did not receive?’

He shook his hand at the king, after the Polish manner.

‘Or whence, say, the crown of your head? Behold how in the fragile wisdom of your heart you have placed God on the left, nay behind, and you are followed by a malign spirit.

Therefore your sins are multiplied and numbered in heaven, the very days with the false prophet might bear your own judgement against you; your royalties are defiled with the foulest crime; your chambers stink evilly. Therefore God has arisen in wrath and is become terrible and angered against you. But thus says the lord, because your fathers stood holily at my altar and did not perversely desert my voice, and because I singled you out as a man apart from the common herd and by so distinguishing loved you, I shall not visit your iniquities under my rod, neither shall I cast you down as I decreed, but I shall permit you to sit on a tottering throne.

‘But if you will recognize my arm potent with zeal, if you will leave your impiety, if you will deck yourself with purity, if you will expel the fetid leprosy and worm from your bosom, not returning to your vomit, I too will avert my anger and though late your remaining days will be firmly grounded in fortitude.

‘Kings accursed and powerful potentates, because they have neglected my laws, will fall before your feet and your sword will be a terror to the nations, the heavens will surround you with safekeeping, while in the strength of your right hand your enemies will perish.

‘The hearts of your people, alienated from you, will in a short time be cleansed again. Those, however, who conspired against the holy one will die from sores. This far, if you stay close to my side strongly and faithfully, my spirit will overshadow you and you will come forth wise; and riches from heaven will make you flourish. This is the truth and the law of the lord which was proposed to you in “The light of God this day for Stephen.”

‘When you shall see the time strike down with the sword that impious generation with their sons and their people (concerning which they say is the lord’s and he yielded it to you in servitude); because Bohemia (no less odious to heaven than heavy and wearisome to the earth) is sealed to you; and gather and adorn her, cursed, with the radiance of the sun.

‘Fly to the north wind and touch the sea with your fingers, I shall show you my name and you will set your praises among the waters. Gird yourself also as to the brave, embrace the mountains of the south and build for me an altar. For I shall tear the bonds from them. From the west they stretch out violent hands towards your vitals. But I shall cut off those nails with iron.

‘Lastly, if you cease from your sins, if you burn with zeal for heaven and walk with me your lord God in justice and whatever in my name may be blessed, you will receive splendour in me; but if, however, you are unwilling to hear the words which the lord has spoken, I shall be

beyond. Today I have exalted you in the lord and I have placed your head among the stars. Therefore be obedient.’

30

At three in the afternoon the following day, Dee records, the king sent for me to hear what I had to say to him, as I had sent him word that I had something to say to him on God’s behalf. When I was come into his privy chamber and all others excluded but only the Lord Laski who came with me and stayed by the king’s commandment, I said to him as follows.

‘Lo, king, the God of heaven and earth has placed me before you and has showed to you his will, has nourished up me his servant from my youth to this day in the fear of him and the fervent desire of true wisdom, whereby I have attained, through his help, to the knowledge and secrets of the things in nature ...’

There is no record of what Dee said further. But earlier in the day spirit had instructed him to offer Stephen participation in the knowledge of these secrets of nature, ‘which knowledge, behold, in the name of God and for his sake, and because he has chosen you, I offer up to you and willingly make you partaker of.’

This being done, Dee was told, ‘be not afraid to open your mouth unto him, as you did to Rudolf in writing: “Behold, oh king, I can make the philosopher’s stone, for so they call it. Bear you therefore the charge, and give me a name within your court that I may have access to you, and yearly maintenance of you for us both.”’

31

The last surviving record of any spiritual action in Kraków , on June 6, suggests that Stephen had not proved receptive.

‘I have, oh lord, according to my simple ability endeavoured myself to declare to Stephen those things I was willed,’ Dee declared.

‘Here is a great head with wings like a cherubim, all of fire, the eyes are very big, as big as your hat, and his head as big as this table,’ said Kelly.

‘He that is asleep, let him sleep on, he that is in the highway, let him not return home,’ said the great head. ‘He that eats let him not rise but eat still, and he that weeps let him weep still, he that rejoices let him rejoice for ever. He that goes awry let him not return into the way. He that plants his vineyard let him not see it, he that gathers the grapes let him not drink of them, he that blasphemes the name of God, let him blaspheme for he does not return. But he that looks up to heaven let him not cast his eyes upon the earth. Behold, the lord has forgotten the earth

and it is a burden to me that I am here, therefore I go. To those that do well, the steward is ready with the reward: woe be unto the monster of the earth for he is accursed.

‘Put all things to silence that the lord has touched. The receptacle and the books, see you do not open them or touch them until you hear more from me. But be of right heart and walk the ways that you are returned into.’

32

Dee and Kelly remained in Kraków for another two months until July, but there is no further record of any action there.

April 19 Dee records ‘I took ghostly counsel of Dr Hannibal, the great divine, that had now set out some of his commentaries upon *Pymander*.’

The following day ‘I received the communion at the Bernadines, where that doctor is a professor. This day E. K. took ghostly counsel and comfort, as his case required.’

April 22, Easter Monday, ‘very devoutly in St Stephen’s church, E. K. received the communion, to my unspeakable gladness and content, being a thing so long and earnestly required and urged of him by our spiritual good friends.’

Whether Dee met further with Dr Hannibal Rosseli is unknown. Rosseli’s edition of Hermes Trismegistus’s *Pymander*, published that year, would undoubtedly have been of interest to Dee.

At some point in Kraków Dee and Kelly met Francesco Pucci who was to cause them a lot of trouble. An astrological note by Dee on the Polish wife of a Florentine named Montelupi ends, ‘This note I received at Kraków , July 12, 1585, from F. Pucci.’

It may be that Dee was engaged in further astrological consultations. They were one of his specialities, a way of securing some income as well as a useful source of information. But otherwise it is not known what Dee and Kelly did during the remainder of their time in Poland.

ELEVEN : BURNING THE BOOKS

1

When the records resume in August 1585, Dee and Kelly are back in Prague, holding an action with Francesco Pucci.

Pucci was born in Florence in 1543 into a conservative Catholic family which had produced three cardinals. He had been a merchant in Lyons where he became caught up in religious disputes. Inheriting a family fortune, he studied theology at Paris, where after witnessing the St Bartholomew's Day massacre he became a Protestant. He went on to Oxford, taking out his M. A. in 1574.

The university authorities, however, were suspicious of him. 'They knew him to have been a zealous papist and no well-grounded Protestant,' Anthony à Wood writes, and they found means to remove him about the time he was endeavouring to be a theological lecturer. He went to London and then to Basel, where he entered into a debate with Fausto Paulo Sozzini (Socinus) on the immortality of the soul. Pucci believed all creatures were immortal; Sozzini held that future life was a conditional privilege. Pucci also publicly declared that all men were by nature in a state of salvation. He was expelled from Basel so returned to London, where he was imprisoned. Released, he then went to Flanders, to Holland and to Antwerp, disputing 'not only with those such that he esteemed heterodox but with those of his own opinion.' A prolific writer, Pucci continued his disputes in his tracts and his vast correspondence.

He followed Sozzini to Kraków, where he engaged in frequent disputes with the Jesuits. It was in Kraków that he attached himself to Dee's household, and, despite Sozzini's strong objections, returned with Dee and Kelly to Prague. On his arrival in Prague an angelic voice instructed him to rejoin the Roman Catholic church. He did so immediately, and wrote to Sozzini and other friends entreating them to do the same.

An ambiguous figure, the Catholic church trusted him no more than the Oxford authorities had. Arrested in Salzburg in 1593, he was tried by the Inquisition, condemned as a heretic, and executed in Rome in 1597.

Dee and Kelly came to suspect he was no true friend, but was reporting on them to the Papal authorities. They had admitted him to their spiritual actions, and he had talked about them indiscreetly.

At the action of August 6, 1585 in Prague, Uriel appeared and gave a speech of strikingly conventional orthodoxy. If Pucci was reporting back to someone, there was nothing heretical to report back here. Indeed, with the imagery of the shop and merchants, Uriel's speech could

be taken as a rebuke particularly addressed to Pucci himself.

‘The whole world has become the open shop of Satan to deceive the merchants of the earth with all abominations,’ said Uriel. ‘But what, are you the pedlars of such wares, or the carriers abroad of lies and false doctrine? Do you think it is a small matter to tie the sense of God’s Scriptures and mysteries to the sense and snatching of your imaginations?’

‘Are you so far entered into the shop of abomination that you appoint to the son of God the time of his coming, the descending of his prophets, and the time when he shall visit the earth?’

‘The son of God did not speak his own words, in that he was flesh, but the words of his father. His disciples did not teach except through the Holy Ghost. Do you therefore dare to presume to teach and open the secret chamber of the highest, being not called?’

‘Tell me, have you left your merchandise and the counting of your deceitfully gotten money to become teachers of the word of God? Are you not ashamed to teach before you understand?’

‘Whoever understands the Scriptures must seek to understand them by ordinance and spiritual tradition. But what spiritual tradition do you understand, or by what ordinance are the Scriptures opened to you? You will say you are informed by the holy fathers and by the same spirit that they taught, by the same spirit you understand. You say so, but you do not do so.’

‘Seek to understand his word according to his holy spirit, which holy spirit you must find and shall find in a visible church. Whoever is contrary to the will of God, which is delivered to his church, taught by his apostles, nourished by the Holy Ghost, delivered to the world, and by Peter brought to Rome, there taught by his successors, held and maintained, is contrary to God and to his truth.’

‘Luther has his reward. Calvin his reward. The rest, all have erred and wilfully run astray, separating themselves from the church and congregation of Christ obstinately and through the instigation of their father the devil have their reward.’

‘Do not despise the church because of the transgressions of man, but submit your neck under that holy yoke and ordinance which shall lead you to the congregation governed by the spirit of God, where you shall understand the secret of God’s book.’

Dee read the instructions to Pucci in Latin. They seemed to us to be wonderfully pithy and to the purpose, he remarks.

But what was the purpose? Uriel’s speech was unlike anything that they had been given before. But if it was designed to be repeated by Pucci to the apostolic nuncio in Prague, then it may well have been to the purpose of presenting the spiritual actions as respectably orthodox. Not that that would help. The very act of summoning up spirits was heretical and prohibited in

itself.

2

Except for the action with Pucci, the records for the rest of 1585 and early 1586 are missing from the spiritual transactions. What Dee and Kelly were doing during this period is unknown. Were they in contact with Rudolf's court? Were they engaging in alchemical experiments? Nothing is known.

In the 1960s, however, a long account by Dee of certain amazing events in that period was discovered in Ashmole's papers by C. H. Josten, who translated it from the Latin. Different in manner from the usual spiritual records, it reads as if Dee had written it as an explanation or defence of his encounter with the Catholic hierarchy in Prague. Latin was Dee's usual medium of communication with court officials in Bohemia. It is unlikely to have been intended as a report back to England. But whether it was designed to be read by the Spanish ambassador, or Rudolf, or Dr Kurz, or Count Rožmberk, a figure shortly to be encountered, or some other person, is not clear.

Within a few days of arriving back in Prague, Dee records, they received a visit from a certain great nobleman. He was delivering a request from the new apostolic nuncio, Lord Germanico Malaspina, Bishop of San Severo, that Dee should visit him.

'Our fame,' he said, 'had so much and for such a long time been resounding round his ears that he passionately desired to enjoy some friendly conversation with us.'

'During the following eight months the request was repeated with urgency many times. But I answered many times also that I did not wish to defer and procrastinate my calling on him out of any haughty and proud disposition, nor because I thought to be threatened by some suspicion on his part (though this great nobleman might have heard of the bad reports I had received according to which the Most Reverend was preparing violence and laying an ambush for me). I said also that I was aware of the very great controversies between our rulers, and that, on account of them, we would hardly be able to meet guiltlessly or at least without some suspicion of guilt, unless our rulers gave permission.'

During 1585 England had begun negotiating a formal alliance with the Protestant Dutch provinces in their rebellion against Spanish control, and at the same time attempting to encourage Protestant German princes to contribute to an army against France to reduce Spanish and Roman Catholic influence there. It was the first time that a formal Protestant alliance against Catholic Spain had been entered into by England, although for years there had been attempts to establish a Protestant league by such anti-Catholic activists as Walsingham

and Sidney. These new initiatives would not have endeared English visitors like Dee and Kelly to the Catholic counter-reformationists in Prague. Spain was seen as the champion of the Catholic church, the military arm of the papacy. When Dee referred to 'the very great controversies between our rulers' he may have had something of this in mind, assuming he was informed on these matters. Or he may have been referring to the excommunication of Elizabeth by the Pope in 1570.

Finally, after March 20, 1586, Dee records, Malaspina became very severe and pressing, through the great nobleman. Two days later he repeated the request through Francesco Pucci, whose acquaintance he had made a few days previously, and who belonged to our household. He urged his request most passionately with some sort of apostolic command, though adding here and there somewhat sweeter and more pleasant words, signifying that he would rather visit us in our house than call us to his, but that he found himself hindered by the business of his sudden departure.

Was the nuncio required to make a report on Dee before leaving? The previous nuncio had held the dinner party that discussed Dee a few days before he, too, had left.

Dee and Kelly had some agitated discussions about what to do, and finally decided one night that they would call on the nuncio at seven the following morning, Thursday, March 27, and send out Pucci in advance about six o'clock to tell the nuncio. When Pucci delivered the message Malaspina sent his coach for them. Riding in another coach they met Malaspina's on the way, but did not enter it. Were they suspicious of a kidnapping intention?

They arrived as the envoy of the Duke of Florence was leaving. The nuncio admitted them, gave them his right hand, and took them into his room where four chairs were placed. He placed Dee beside him and Kelly next to Dee, and let Pucci sit down opposite Kelly.

He began immediately. 'Who does not see how much the condition of the Christian religion is in distress and danger, and how the heretics are gaining strength from day to day? Surely if my courage were not fortified by Christ's promise, I should doubt its utter destruction and extinction. Things have come to such a pass that if the King of Spain happened to die while the Catholic church remained in this lamented condition, Rome and the apostolic see would be threatened with the gravest peril.'

It sounded all very high-minded. The trap followed.

'Yet it is strange that no remedy or counsel against so great an evil can be devised, found or obtained in this our time, in which some men and women who are pious members of the Catholic church might receive various revelations, illuminations and consolations from the good angels of God and from God himself. Yet when a diligent inquiry into such matters was

made, it was found that so far all such consolations are private, not public ones, and they are considered to be private, not public reformation.’

A few more high-minded sentiments followed about the iniquity of heresies springing up, the scandalous transformation of bishoprics into secular dignities in Saxony, and the disappointing failure of any fruitful harvest from the religious communities and seminaries; then they were invited to incriminate themselves.

‘Therefore if you, gentlemen, with whom, by singular favour of God, blessed angels are often present, and to whom God himself reveals his mysteries, if you have received any counsel, or if you can think of any help to be employed against those evils affecting us all, I beg you to disclose them to me. I shall listen to you gladly and with the greatest attention.’

Dee’s reply was a masterpiece of diplomatic evasion, polite but firm, avoiding the nuncio’s invitation to admit to having dialogue with spirits about the state of the Catholic church. The formality of the reply makes it quite clear that Dee recognized the trap and was, moreover, letting the nuncio know that the trap was recognised.

‘It is indeed true that iniquity still prevails and that the chaste bride of God, who has suffered great violence, is compelled to withdraw into solitude. Yet it is not in our hands to give counsel or to suggest remedies against such great evils and so prodigious a calamity. Besides, even if it were true that, by a singular favour of God, we frequently receive information and instruction from the good angels of God and sometimes from God himself, whose commands in former times we carried out with very great princes of this world, yet we have not received hitherto any express advice of God or admonition from the angels with regard to the matter now put before us; and since normally such matters lie outside our province and are not subject to my authority or office, it seems to me that I should rather be silent on them than proffer some human judgement of mine in a business of such great moment.

‘We confess, however, that very great and very many mysteries and counsels of God are known to us, of which all human talents conjoined could not invent or expect even a thousandth of a thousandth part. God, however, so governs us by a certain curb of silence and has so tempered our minds with the evenness of inward joy, that we are neither so careless as to prate about these matters, nor arrogantly puffed up by the knowledge of such great mysteries. Indeed, for the most part, we lead a monastic life, and it is with the greatest reluctance that we let such manifest evidence of our inward joy be known.

‘Therefore, if to overcome those very great difficulties God should hereafter please to impart to us any advice or bestow on us any remedy, we shall be most ready to signify it to those to whom that advice or remedy has to be communicated.

‘And, truly, though many months ago I would have had more leisure to call on you, most reverend father, than I have now, yet I never desired to do so with as much readiness and resolution as I have now.’

And so, Dee records, after a few more civilities and a most definite protestation of my loyalty towards our invincible lady the Queen of England, I ceased to speak.

The most reverend father replied that he was very satisfied with this reply of mine, and that he was glad we had at last agreed to meet him and to have such agreeable conversation with him.

3

Who knows whether the nuncio was as satisfied with the answer as he claimed? Who knows how he assessed the situation? Perhaps whatever Dee had said, they would have remained under suspicion, and the plots to discredit Dee and Kelly and keep them away from the Emperor would have continued. Yet all might have been well if Kelly had not then decided to offer his own analysis of the problems of the Catholic church.

‘It seems to me,’ Kelly began, ‘that if one looks for a counsel or remedy that might bring about a reformation in the whole church, the following will be good and obvious.

‘While there are some shepherds and ministers of the Christian flock who, in their faith and in their works, excel all others, there are also those who seem devoid of the true faith and idle in their good works. Their life is so odious to the people and sets so pernicious an example that by their own bad life they cause and promote more destruction in the church of God than they could ever repair by their most elaborate, most long and most frequent discourses. And for that reason their words do not carry the necessary conviction and are wanting in profitable authority. For the people think that, in like manner, they too may speak good words and yet live bad lives, and have but little faith, because that they think is the general practice of their shepherds, ministers and teachers; and the life of the prelates as well as that of the people is such that living faith and genuine charity may, in this age, hardly find any true worshippers in God’s church. What sound religion, what true worship of God, can thus exist amongst us? May the doctors, shepherds and prelates therefore mend their ways; may they teach and live Christ both by their words as well as by their conduct. For thus, in my opinion, a great and conspicuous reformation of the Christian religion would be brought about most rapidly.’

‘That was well spoken of you and is truly concordant with the Christian and apostolic doctrine,’ the nuncio replied. ‘I thank you and I shall call on you at your house where I hope we may then have a longer conversation on such matters.’

But what the nuncio actually felt was very different, Dee discovered.

It is quite certain not only that his reply to the speech of my friend E. K. was a hypocritical one, but also that the poison of vipers was concealed under his lips, and that by some divine power a most ferocious spirit of tyranny was at that time being repressed in his heart, although he used such honey-sweet and humble words for the beginning.

Dee was told by 'the secretary of a certain great king', who had been told by the nuncio himself, just before he left Prague, that Kelly's speech had so filled that most reverend lord with inward fury that he had said, if it had not been for certain respects, he would have had the said Edward thrown out of the window.

Defenestration was an all too well known traditional way of dealing with troublesome opponents in Bohemian politics. The threat confirmed Dee's fears. What may we hope from the hands of that apostolic nuncio or his like? he wrote. What would they do to us, not only try to do, if we were accused of any, even the least, crime, when such a tyrannical death, nay such barbaric murder, may be wished on men who are truly Catholic, and quiet, who lead an almost monastic life, who are not undertaking any innovation in God's church by word or by writing, who have not been accused of any crime, and whose utterance on the contrary was openly praised although it had, as he said, quite fiercely annoyed him?

4

Writing up the account a few days after St George's day, April 23, Dee went on to record two other episodes involving Kelly.

On the Wednesday before Easter Kelly went to a certain Jesuit priest, who was a professor and lecturer in theology, for confession.

When E. K. had said to the priest all that he had intended to say, that priest began to inquire curiously about more and more things which to mention here would neither be to the point nor give you pleasure. The priest insisted and tried to make E. K. acknowledge himself guilty of a certain very great crime which he had not yet confessed.

E. K. denied it, even denied it steadily, and explained plainly that in the previous year he had discovered abundantly, accurately, sincerely and fully to a certain other Jesuit in Kraków all the crimes and grave errors of his entire antecedent life, that he was then wholly cleansed and absolved, that his sins weighed heavily on him as a perpetual burden, and that otherwise he would most justly deserve infernal punishment; he asserted that this was his firm conviction. And that, after careful casting up the circumstances of his life, he had already confessed seriously, honestly, and piously to his present spiritual father any grave and dangerous wound

that had been inflicted on his conscience from that time onwards. What more need I say?

At last the priest went so far as to charge E. K. with crime or sin because we had said, nay, had vainly boasted, he alleged, to my lord the apostolic nuncio, and elsewhere, also to the Spanish ambassador, that we often had conversations with good angels and with God himself, and received from them many revelations.

E. K. acknowledged that in fact we had received, and still were receiving, many consolations by divine and angelic revelations. But the priest contended that it was not probable or credible that we should have any intercourse with good angels; on the other hand the devil very often transformed himself into the semblance of an angel of light and therefore one had to consider that we might be deceived.

E. K. replied that from very sound arguments and also by the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, we knew for certain that we had dealt and were dealing with genuine angels of light and truth, and with loyal helpers. I shall leave out many other arguments he used and only want to mention this one: that by the authority and testimony of the Holy Spirit (1 *John*, chapter 4) any spirit who owns that Jesus Christ has become flesh is from God; yet all the spirits who gave information to us, or taught us, do own that Jesus Christ has become flesh; therefore, that all the angels informing or teaching us are from God; that we are prepared to swear an holy oath and to assert until our very death that the minor proposition is true; that most copious volumes contain the evidence of our revelations; that therefore our angels are not angels of the infernal regions.

No sooner had those volumes of ours been mentioned, than this priest seized the opportunity to demand that we should hand them over to be examined and judged by the most reverend lord nuncio, by the rector of the Jesuits, and thirdly by himself.

E. K. replied, 'I think that neither could you judge them, nor should you claim authority to pronounce judgement on those revelations.'

The priest replied, quoting 1 *Corinthians*, chapter 6, 'Do you not know that we shall sit in judgement over angels?'

To this E. K. replied: 'It is possible that the apostles, being with Christ the judge, deemed the devils were, and would be, most rightly damned. But I do not believe that you, father, are an apostle, nor that any successor of the apostles be denoted by that saying of Paul. Besides, only evil ones will be subjected to that judgement, not good ones. Yet truly, our angelic preceptors are good and therefore they are not, and will not be, answerable to judgement. No angels will for that reason be judged by you, father, in accordance with that Pauline sentence. We, however, who are subject to your ecclesiastical authority, do not teach, or write, or indeed

believe, or shall ever believe, any doctrine contrary or repugnant to the Catholic, apostolic and orthodox religion. All messages which we receive tend chiefly to the praise, the honour and the glory of God. They continually exhort and even guide us to a betterment of our life, to piety and to the practising of peace and charity towards our neighbours. It is certainly true that they contain many wonderful mysteries and secrets which are given only to us and not to others. Those are our private documents and our introductory lessons in a celestial school. We talk about them most unwillingly and only when we receive a divine command or permission to do so. Besides those books are not in my hands, but are kept in the custody of my friend the doctor.'

When the priest heard this he tried at once to influence E. K. by a certain fraud and stratagem so that he might, as it were, wrench those books from my hands. E. K. detested the impiety of the priest and altogether refused to follow that nefarious advice.

At last E. K. became so heated in his zeal that he proposed to the priest the following experiment and test of truth.

'May you, father, and I,' he said, 'go to some convenient and secret place. Let us then, each after his own manner, invoke almighty God, the creator of heaven and earth, and pray to him humbly and ardently that, if our angelic preceptors be good and from God, fire from heaven shall consume and destroy you, father. But that, if they be bad angels of the infernal regions, the fire from heaven may most rapidly destroy me and wipe me from the face of the earth.'

The father refused to adopt this choice and to try out that stipulation. He said he did not wish to tempt God in this manner.

Finally that father turned to the exploration of other matters and asked for what reasons we had come, as no revenues were being supplied to us from England. He asserted that there indeed we were accounted very odious men. By virtue of his present authority he enjoined most severely on E. K. that he should disclose to him the truth of this matter.

E. K. replied, 'Although I know, father, that this question is beyond your authority, yet I wish to obey you, father, because you are a minister of God almighty, and because it is in the name of God that you ask me in this extraordinary manner and demand an answer. Know then that by doing this and that (true and clear details were here mentioned) and by divine favour, we have so far been amply provided with sustenance and clothing.'

What were the activities encompassed in 'this and that'? Dee himself never gives any details in the records. Did the priest suspect them of being English spies? Was the lack of revenue from England seen as merely a strategy to conceal some secret connection?

The argument continued for four hours on the Wednesday, and again on Good Friday. The priest refused to give Kelly absolution.

‘The matter of your revelations,’ he said, ‘must be examined by an authority higher than mine, and I cannot persuade myself to grant you remission of sins.’

‘At least,’ said E. K., ‘purge me of the blemish of those crimes and sins which I have piously, devoutly and humbly confessed to you.’

Yet he could not obtain even that from him. E. K. realized in these circumstances that he had to withdraw. How irreligiously (I will not put it more strongly) E. K. was used, the Catholic church will certainly find out in good time.

5

The second episode occurred four days later, April 8, 1586. On the Tuesday after Easter when E. K. was sitting at a meal with a friend of his, a citizen of Prague, it was enjoined upon him by a spiritual voice that he should arise and at once betake himself to his spiritual father.

The friend at whose table he was then sitting, a future witness, and two Jesuit fathers who had been sent for, accompanied him there. He then modestly, quietly and truthfully called to mind the things which had been discussed, disputed, and considered between him and his spiritual father, and did so in a manner which gave those witnesses a clear idea of what both had said, and informed them, where possible, of the very words that had been used on either side, so that never any false rumours might be spread or erroneous reports and conjectures made about these matters, and that what really had been said might, as far as possible, be established by the consent of each witness.

Having at once put the food out of his hands and left the meal, E. K. rose silently, and his friend with him, to the astonishment of all present. They left the house and directed their steps to the college of the Jesuits.

On his way E. K. was warned by a spiritual voice declaring, ‘Unless you take care, Ossa and Pucci will deceive you and render your design fruitless.’

E. K. promptly told his friend this.

When they had reached the college and E. K. had asked the janitor whether certain fathers and whether the Jesuit who was his spiritual father were at the college, the janitor said they were. They entered. But when E. K. and his friend had been inside for a while, Ossa and Pucci came towards them. They asked E. K. the reason for his coming.

‘I have to speak to some fathers,’ he said, ‘and to my father confessor.’

They desired no less than that E. K. should then speak to them (as Pucci acknowledged the

following night) and unexpectedly tried with all their art and assiduity to prevent his meeting. They would, Ossa said, have a servant sent out to find the fathers and to bring them to the stove which Ossa was then occupying there for a few days. They urged E. K. that meanwhile he should listen with them in their school to the splendid and painstaking declamation of a certain student.

Remembering the spiritual warning, E. K. was aware of their sly designs, yet hoped all the same that they would find and call those fathers whom he wished to see. But when, after the end of the declamation, E. K. enquired more precisely about those fathers, he was told they were not in the house and could not be found.

It is hardly possible to say how much E. K. was then stricken with grief because he had not heeded that divine command and had not acted with as much caution as he had been advised; also because a man living with us at our house who was in some degree privy to our mystical concerns had so much favoured our adversaries as to render fruitless our very honest and pious endeavours.

His grief and his immoderate zeal to carry out the business enjoined upon him then so excited E. K. that Pucci told us after our meal on the evening of the same Tuesday, that he was much satisfied with the outcome of that day inasmuch as E. K. had not seen those fathers whom he had wanted to see because, he said, the ashen appearance of E. K.'s face had made him realize that he had come with so restless and irascible a mind that even greater quarrels might have followed.

When Pucci had thus spoken, E. K. became enraged because Pucci rejoiced for the very reason that made E. K. grieve; because he had said that E. K. had come to see those Jesuits in a restless and irascible condition; because Pucci had been so bold as to wish to obstruct his divinely ordained endeavours; because Pucci perhaps wished to triumph before Ossa over having vanquished E. K.'s earnest assiduity by his own deception and cunning; and above all because the opportunity had passed unused at which the proceedings of his confession might have been adequately established before witnesses while the memory of the very words that had been spoken was still fresh because that father confessor had previously said that the matter of the revelations must be examined by a higher authority.

E. K. became inflamed with such fierce indignation, such vehement and furious passion, that Pucci almost feared his last hour had struck.

And yet when E. K. during this most passionate fit of anger had carefully considered that all this had resulted from a curious error of Pucci's who, seeing the expression on E. K.'s face had presumed, as Pucci himself admitted, not only to interpose his inconsiderate judgement but

then also to obstruct God's will by his actions, E. K. at once sent a servant to fetch that friend of his who could be an undoubted witness of the whole design, of the divine command, of the forewarning, and indeed of the whole event, a witness most necessary at the present hour for a just condemnation of Pucci's bold, inconsiderate and curious judgement and performance.

Woken up in his bed, in the middle of the night, that loyal witness, who had not been forewarned or suborned, came at once. I was allowed freely to examine this witness, Dee records, while all others were silent and listening attentively. He testified that E. K. had been very quiet during the meal; that with him he had gone today to the Jesuit's house or college with the intention of furthering quietness, peace and truth; that there they had encountered Ossa and Pucci and that both these had in various ways frustrated Mr Kelly's designs, precisely as a spiritual voice had beforehand signified to Mr Kelly and as he had told him on their way.

When the results of this examination had made Pucci realize that E. K.'s honest design had been divinely enjoined upon him and had been received by him with a quiet mind, also that all the other circumstances mentioned by the witness were established by sufficient evidence, he was in a much calmer condition of mind than previously. And after that honest witness had gone away, Pucci realized that he had been mistaken in his physiognomical judgement, also that a divine order and mandate had intervened. All this filled him with much regret.

He added, 'If you had warned me that in this matter you had received an order from the lord, I would certainly not have hindered you.' Then he said, on bended knees and extending his hands toward heaven, 'I wish to make amends to you in every possible way.'

Then a spiritual voice near E. K.'s head admonished him saying, 'Forgive him.'

Instantly E. K. said, 'I forgive you.'

And soon after that we all went to bed, for it was past midnight.

6

Dee's Latin narrative now continues with an account of an extraordinary event.

Early in the morning of the Wednesday following, a spiritual voice addressed itself to E. K. which forbade to the three of us eating during the whole of that day any animal food (thus enjoining on us a light fast) and which commanded us to repair on the Thursday next following at eight in the morning to our usual place of assembly there to perceive the lord's will.

And on Thursday, April 10, at about eight, we came together in the usual place, my oratory, which is at the top of the tower, a small heated room, truly elegant and commodious. There, on bended knees, I spoke in the name of all of us, as our common advocate. And a short while after that, when the three of us were seated, I ready to write, E. K. opposite at the same

table (a new and very fine one), Pucci on a bench along the wall of the oratory, there descended from on high, with some sort of spiritual sound, a voice, near to the face of E. K. It seemed to him that this voice had the centre of its utterance not far from his mouth, at a distance of about one foot, and thence touched his ears with words that were certainly English, so that their power and proper significance might much more exactly and certainly be conveyed to us.

In the morning they were given a long indictment of the sins of the world and the church. The session resumed after lunch.

‘It is incumbent on me to defend you and protect you by my invisible wisdom and strength, overthrowing the idle fancies of men in their fullness, and at the very height of their damnable pride.

‘Arise then,’ Dee was instructed. ‘Place before me the books and all that which you have received from me, and then you will learn what else I shall tell you and how, by one look, I shall destroy the eyes of your adversaries at the very time when they think they see most sharply.’

I rose, Dee records, went downstairs and fetched all records and volumes which had been dictated to us during four years continuously by God and by his holy angels, my own writings, and some other things. I fetched them, I say, in an oblong white box, three feet almost in length, one and a quarter feet wide, and three quarters of a foot high. I did not however fetch the table often called the table of the covenant.

‘Gather your books together, indeed those which stand up or have a spine, from the first to the last,’ instructed the voice, ‘and also the one you have now in your hands, with the exception only of the action of the present day, and place them here before me.’

‘What shall I do, oh lord, with today’s action?’ Dee asked.

‘Cut it out of the book.’

‘And what shall I do with the holy table?’

‘Do as you have been commanded. Sunder the books apart, each by itself, and place them on this table.’

I sundered the books, or rather those folio volumes which were either bound or decently sewn together, twenty-seven in number, and then, having cut out this present action, I added the volume which was at the time in my hands, and so they were twenty-eight in all, namely four times seven. And they contained as in a continued narrative all the things which from the first hour of our (namely E. K.’s and J. D.’s) conjunction until the present hour, had been revealed and shown to us by God’s faithful angels and by God himself. And in one of those twenty-eight volumes there were forty-eight individual books, most mystical and (as God

himself is witness) more valuable than the value of all things in the whole world might be accounted. For in them the admirable divine wisdom and power were contained which, at a time determined by God, we must use to his honour and glory. There was another volume among the twenty-eight which was ancillary to those forty-eight individual books: its title was *48 Claves Angelica* and it was entirely written in the angelic language. In another volume of those twenty-eight we had a most clear interpretation thereof in our English tongue. In addition to those forty-eight individual books there was a very short one, which book was *The Mystery of Mysteries and the Holy of Holies*; for it alone contained the profoundest mysteries of God himself and of the almighty divine trinity that any creature will ever live to know. Its key was not yet granted to us. Another volume among those twenty-eight contained that wisdom and science with which Enoch, by God's will, was imbued; where there was also something agreeing with the testimony of the apostle Judas (about the prophecy of Enoch). In some of those forty-eight books there were contained (besides very many other things of inestimable value) all sacred books, full and perfect, all those books, I say, which after and before the incarnation of Christ had been written by the spirit of truth. And what other matters were comprised in those books I do not consider lawful to disclose or mention in detail, or even summarily, before the time determined by God. Yet it seemed very opportune and necessary to me here to commit to everlasting memory some account of those twenty-eight volumes, and I hope that this will not displease almighty God.

When I had separated the aforesaid volumes as I had been commanded and placed them on the table, I spoke as follows.

‘Have I now, oh lord, entirely fulfilled your command?’

The voice said, ‘You, Kelly, shall bring hither also the little black bag, the book and the powder which you have hidden.’

I think that, in accordance with the truthfulness of this narrative, I should mention here something concerning E. K. and those objects which had been entrusted to his custody. This command of God was so unexpected to E. K. and so little to his liking that his heart was very much overcome with helpless amazement. All the same, he was firmly resolved to render obedience to God, though the flesh was somewhat reluctant. It seemed to him that the joints of his spine, near the hip-bones, were being torn apart, and he was greatly tormented by pains such as, he asserted, he had never suffered in all his life.

We prayed to God that he might render him strong in faith, willing in obedience, and compliant. He felt such vehement internal pain, and the struggle of the flesh against the spirit was so upsetting, that, when the pain and the contest were at their highest pitch, E. K.

ejaculated this sentence. 'Oh lord, I did not receive this from you.'

We exhorted him to be obedient to God and to fill himself with undoubting faith in the promises which God had made to us in the past and which he had often confirmed to us by his inviolable oath.

E. K. replied to me, 'The spirit is willing to fulfil this command of God, nay, I should rather say, it would be, if now, by God's will, I had to die; but forgive me, and may God forgive me, that my flesh should thus manifest its weakness and invent a delay.'

After these words he suddenly rose from his seat, went away quickly, returned and brought that little black bag containing the book and the powder and placed them on the table beside the twenty-eight books. The little bag was new. It was made of black fustian, *berkat*, in German, to be precise, and was provided with new black braces to close its opening, after the manner of certain purses. The capacity of the little bag was such that it seemed to me apt to contain one peck of wheat. The book, a volume comprising two individual books on different subjects, and that holy powder, had been assigned by God not only to the two of us, and to our children, but also to other servants of God; and, before a certain time determined by God, they were not to be put to any use by us, by any kind of practice. The custody of that great treasure had been entrusted to E. K. The holy stone of the philosophers, he noted in the margin.

There was this mystery of nature and art, of which arrogant and proud philosophasters and the greater part of the learned are wont to maintain that it cannot be made in any way. We may, therefore, most justly judge, adjudicate and condemn by most certain evidence that very great pride of the worldlings and their ignorance. Truly and in God, I do assert that the performance and the power, inherent and emanating, of this treasure are so great that the treasures of all Christian princes and kings, collected together and conjoined, could not be regarded as equal in value to even a tenth part of it.

So I encouraged E. K. with a few words and admonished him that he should recall the faith of Abraham who, when God commanded that he should offer Isaac as a holocaust, although God had previously promised him that in Isaac he would be called to seed and propagation, did not hesitate to offer as a holocaust this his only son, the future ancestor, by promise, of the progeny which he was to bless. He did not try to argue after human fashion (by comparing the promise to the command) that God was not constant to him, or that he was attempting to bring about an act contrary to Nature. Likewise we, too, must not hesitate to obey humbly and quickly the command of God who now desired us to return to him those books and our other treasures; and since we were entirely certain that God is loyal and most constant in keeping his promises, anything that God would do about or with those books and treasures would all be to

his glory and praise. Our consolation was great and would at length lead to a reprehension or punishment of our enemies.

When I had finished I said to God, 'Behold, oh lord, you have here that little black bag, with your property, the book and the powder, inside. We desire to know what further you wish may be done with them.'

'May the world not vanquish you,' the voice said, 'and may you not value riches, human fancies, more than obedience to my will and command. Look, how hard is it to abandon the world? And, since all things are mine, why did you want to say you had by no means received this from me? But I tell you, do not move until it be commanded to you. For the place is holy. And God will today make a certain promise to you of which you do not know yet.'

'Look, you have yet kept back a certain part of the book, which you will in like manner bring here, so that you may not be shameless, and that you may shake off the world.'

'He who loves creatures more than the creator is blind, ignorant and without light and, for that reason, he is to be excluded and to be thrust out of the door when the bridegroom comes.'

'Whatever I may command you today, take care you do it. Place the books which lie here also inside the little bag.'

E. K. went and fetched some manuscript quires consisting each of four sheets, folded in octavo. The writing seemed very old and was in a larger character than our common script. He had cut them out of the volume which had been entrusted to his custody (viz. from the last mentioned book, not from the former). When he had brought them and had again sat down with us, the lord spoke thus to him.

'Rise and throw them into the furnace.'

'Oh lord,' said Dee, 'do you wish them to be put into the very fire or on top of the little bag, oh God. He is willing, oh lord, to be obedient to your will.'

'Rise, Pucci,' said the voice, 'join him and see to it that he puts them into the very fire and, besides, that he also thrusts the little bag and the books after them. You will not withdraw until the fire entirely penetrates them. Do I not resuscitate the dead? Go then, and have faith.'

They arose and went to the furnace. First they threw into the burning fire those quires consisting of four sheets. Then, boldly and briskly, they pushed the little bag into that fire.

While they were thus occupied at the mouth of the furnace, I raised my voice to God on bended knees and rendered thanks to our God with great joy, gladness and exultation. I prayed that he might augment and confirm our faith; that we might in no way have doubts about the most generous promises he had previously made to us; and that, to the honour and glory of his name he might make us most certain witnesses and servants of his wisdom, patience and

goodness. Meanwhile, they applied themselves eagerly and gravely to the completion of the holocaust. They threw into the furnace very light and dry pieces of firewood and very fine chips of timbers and beams in great quantity, stirred the heap of books with a small staff and an iron spit, lifted it, and laid it open, so that the fire might more easily consume all and convert into ashes and embers whatever would be combustible.

When they had so busied themselves for almost a quarter of an hour, E. K. heard a voice saying to him, 'Tell Pucci now that he shall enter.'

Pucci joined me in the oratory, and, on bended knees, he poured out with me prayers of thanksgiving, etc.

As soon as Pucci had entered, E. K. who was standing before the mouth of the furnace, now fully ablaze, signified to us in a loud voice that he was seeing the shape of a man, only from the midriff upwards, walking, as it were, hither and thither among the flames, but that his face did not appear to him.

'It seems,' said E. K., 'that with his right hand he is gathering, or plucking off, something from the tops of the flames. Now I can see that he is recovering from the flames the leaves of books, leaf after leaf. Now he seems to have put together a whole new book.'

And after a short while he said, 'And now he seems to be holding a second book in his hand, yet I do not see where he might have laid away the first. Now I see that he has collected yet another book among the tops of the flames. And now it seems to me that with his fingers he is shaping from the tops of the flames a small box, with the powder. He goes on collecting leaves from the tops of the flames. Now he seems to have two further books; but I cannot see at all where all these things go. Now indeed that man has disappeared very suddenly.'

When everything had been consumed by the fire that could be consumed and when this vision had come to an end, E. K. came towards us and said, 'Come, Pucci, see and judge.'

He went, considered, and came back.

'It appears to me,' he said, 'that nothing is left, except ashes and stones, very few pieces of live coal, a few embers of leaves of paper, the froth of the fire deposited on the sides of the furnace.'

'Now you shall add the other things,' said the voice.

'What other things shall I add, oh lord?' asked Dee.

'Books. Whatever there remains on paper, you shall burn in the same manner as you have burned the former. The other things you may keep, as I shall teach and instruct you before you leave.'

'Is it your wish that we also burn this rolled up and sealed fascicle which by your

command we took from Pucci?’ Dee asked.

This was Pucci’s recantation written with his own hand.

‘No.’

‘Shall I add this writing, a small part of the book of Enoch which you have given to me? Do you want this document also burned?’

‘You shall not bum it.’

Then I set out on the table all remaining loose and unbound papers and sheets, a great many, all received by divine dictation, and did not let one sheet remain that had any writing on it. E. K. and Pucci took all those charts and papers and threw them into the glowing furnace and very quickly they were ablaze and were burned by the fire. Then they reported this to me whereupon I said with my whole heart, ‘Thus I offer to you our almighty, sempiternal and living God, who art our protector and liberator, this welcome and acceptable sacrifice of our obedience. Amen.’

Immediately upon this the divine voice spoke the following words which were received by E. K. our seer and expressed to me.

‘Behold I swear by myself not one letter will perish of whatsoever has been committed to the fire. And as I have the power to raise up glory for me from nothing, so I have power to collect together what has been brought forth by me. Therefore when, later on, the tyranny of those men ceases, collect yourselves and make a prayer before me, invoking the name of the father in the name of Jesus his son. And be aware that, as these things were put into the fire, in the same way you will receive them again. And not one letter of that which I have spoken will perish.

‘Yet because they assert that you have intercourse with the enemy of mankind, my visitation upon you has become a cause of offence to them. The more so because the mysteries of heaven cannot be discovered but to those I choose and who, by my vocation, I put apart from the others. And also, because they will not understand, but will be buried in ignorance, for that reason I have prostrated them in the midst of their fancies. So much so that now they would like to learn.

‘I say to them, “Oh you men of little faith, oh you who sit in the temple of justice yet are defiled by every kind of wretchedness, the lord visited you and you did not notice it. Behold, he made an offer to you, but you declined.” For I shall go forth into their midst and shall overthrow them in my great indignation.

‘For the rest, you will not be troublesome to them and you should no further speak against them, but grieve for their sake, and pray to your father who is in heaven that his mercy be

poured out over all his creatures. Be obedient to their authorities as to those who sit in the seat of justice. If they afflict you, bear it patiently and expect my coming. Lastly, be full of humility and obedience. And do not cease to pour out prayers to him who is the spirit of understanding, so that your eyes may be opened, that you may become celestial and enjoy abundance of the splendour of him who imparts eternal life and grace.'

'Amen,' said Dee.

Then the voice instructed. 'Take both stones out of their mounts and keep them apart. Suspend the table at the end of the hall, that end where there is a chapel of the enemies. Suspend it in that very place.'

'May you, oh lord, declare this more clearly to me,' asked Dee. 'Suspend it on the bare wall, and inside a wooden box, so that it may at all times be before your eyes as a token and memorial.'

And so the Latin narrative ends.

7

And now occurred 'a miracle and a deed to be recorded in perpetuity,' writes Dee, April 30, 1586, when the spiritual transactions resume.

As E. K. stood at the end of the gallery by his chamber, looking over into the vineyard, he seemed to see the little man the gardener, in all manner of behaviour and apparel, who is the chief workman or overseer of Mr Carpio's workmen in the same vineyard. He seemed very handsomely to prune some of the trees. At length he approached under the wall by E. K. and holding his face turned away he said to him, 'I ask you to say to the Doctor that he should come to me.'

And so he went away as it were, cutting here and there the trees very handsomely, and at length over the cherry trees by the house on the rock in the garden he seemed to mount up in a great pillar of fire. E. K. bade his wife to go and see who was in the garden. She came up and brought him word, 'Nobody.'

E. K. then came to me and said, 'I think there is some wicked spirit that would illude me,' and told me what he had seen.

'Then,' I said, 'I will go into the garden,' and bade E. K. come with me.

We went down that way which this creature went, but saw nothing; went to the banqueting house in the vineyard but that place did not please us, so we went along in the way by the cliff side, and sat down on the bank by the great pile of vine-stakes lying in the very south end of the vineyard. And we had not sat there half a quarter of an hour but I espied under the almond tree,

and on the south side of it, being the westerly almond tree, that is it which is standing on the westerly side of the straight path which leads from the north towards the south in the vineyard, I espied, I say, like a sheet of fair white paper lying tossed to and fro in the wind. I rose and went to it and, to the praise of God's truth and power, there I found three of my books lying, which were so diligently burnt the tenth day of April last. The three books were, 1) Enoch's book; 2) the *48 Claves Angelica*; 3) and the third was the book of my gathering of the thirty airs, and entitled *Liber Scientia Terrestris Auxili et Victoria*.

Thereupon E. K. coming to me, I fell on my knees with great thanks yielding to God almighty, and so did E. K. whose mind and body were marvellously affected at the sight of the said books, having no show or sign that they had ever been in the fire, neither by colour or savour or anything wanting.

And after we had sat half an hour under the foresaid almond tree, praising God and wondering at the miracle, suddenly the selfsame gardener-like person appeared by us, but with his face somewhat turned away, and nothing thereof to be adjudged as of Ave the custom is.

He said, 'Kelly, follow me.'

E. K. went and I sat still, awaiting his return.

This gardener went before E. K. and his feet seemed not to touch the ground by a foot height. And as he went before E. K. so the doors seemed to open before him. He led him up the great stairs on the left hand by the vineyard door, and so in at his own chamber door where E. K. has his new study, and then the door going out of that to the stairs opened of itself, and he went up those stairs and at length brought him to the furnace mouth where all the books and papers had been burnt the tenth day of this April. And coming here, there the spiritual creature seemed to set one of his feet on the post on the right hand outside the furnace mouth, and with the other to step to the furnace mouth and so to reach into the furnace, the bricks being now plucked away which stopped the mouth of the furnace, all saving one brick thick, and as he reached into the furnace there appeared a great light, as if there had been a window in the back of the furnace, and also to E. K. the hole which was not greater than the thickness of a brick unstopped, seemed now more than three or four brick thickness wide, and so over his shoulder he reached backward to E. K. all the rest of the standing books, excepting the book out of which the last action was cut, and Pucci's recantation. Also to E. K. appeared in the furnace all the rest of the papers which were not as then delivered out. That being done he bade E. K. go and said he should have the rest afterwards.

He went before in a little fiery cloud, and E. K. followed with the books under his arm, all along the gallery, and came down the stairs by Pucci's chamber door, and then his guide left E.

K. and he brought me the books to my place under the almond tree.

8

Was it a divine miracle? Or was it a marvellous trick? Was this some mechanical illusion designed by Dee, the man who had created the flying scarab for a performance of Aristophanes' *Peace* at Cambridge forty years earlier? Or was it a device of Kelly's? Were they both in it together, or separately?

'By one look I shall destroy the eyes of your adversaries at the very time when they think they see most sharply,' the spiritual voice says in the Latin record. Is this a hint that it was all a matter of optics? Or was the black berkat bag of some fire resistant material? Or was there a compartment in the furnace in which they could put the books to avoid incineration? Or did they burn substitute volumes, and conceal the originals? Were the pages seen to be incinerated merely copies, or notes from which they had made copies? Or was it indeed all true?

When the books were restored, Dee writes that Kelly 'seemed to see' the gardener, who 'seemed' to prune trees. 'Seemed' is not a feature of the previous accounts of spiritual visitation. Is this an indication that Dee is writing a fiction, and putting in 'seemed' to satisfy his own scruples? Dee finds the restored books 'to the praise of God's truth and power.' Indeed, the books were truly there. But 'God's truth and power' are not ascribed to the burning of the books, only to their rediscovery.

The action in which the burning was ordered was an action that did not involve the show stone. Kelly heard a voice about a foot from his face, and this was the voice that instructed them. Similarly the episode of the restoration does not involve the stone. Indeed, it is not an account of a spiritual action, but a narrative of events. There are other occasions in the transactions in which spirits appear outside the show stone, but generally Dee and Kelly preferred to use the stone since this prevented, or at least lessened, the danger of illuders or evil spirits. It is not till the evening of the day that the books were restored that Dee and Kelly consult with spirit in a formal action. Then they offered thanks for the miracle, without spelling out what the miracle was: a miraculous restoration? or a miraculous stratagem?

But what was it all about? Pucci was present at the burning, but not present at the restoration. Does that suggest the episode was designed as a piece of theatre for Pucci, who would then tell the papal authorities that the books were all burned? Was this to prevent Kelly's Jesuit adviser from demanding to see the volumes any more? A self-protective fraud like this would have been sensible and perhaps justifiable as a necessary stratagem. But if the intention was to make it seem that all the spiritual records were destroyed, why was it stressed

that they would be restored?

Or was the episode designed for other ears or eyes than Pucci's? Dee translated the account of the burning into Latin. It was designed to be communicated to someone who did not read English, someone he calls 'a pious reader.' Was the intention to make this 'pious reader' believe in their dealings with spirits? Yet if the Latin translation was to communicate a miraculous event, why did it not include the episode of the restoration of the books? Or was it designed to be shown to someone in the intervening period, in the three weeks between the burning and the restoration?

The original account of the action ordering the burning, the passage they were ordered to cut out of the book, does not survive with the other records. Only the Latin translation exists. Also missing are any records of actions between September 1585 and April 1586. During this time Dee and Kelly were back in Prague from Kraków, and were holding actions at which Pucci was present. Were these the records that were burned in front of Pucci? Were these the records that Pucci knew of, since he had participated in the actions, and which he had reported to the papal authorities? Did Dee and Kelly feel these records were incriminating, and were happy to get rid of them in front of Pucci, so that whatever he alleged to the Papal authorities could never be proven by their records? Or have those pages simply been lost, separated from the rest of the material, as the earliest records were separated, and as the Latin account of the burning was separated? Or are these speculations too sceptical? Were the books indeed burned and miraculously restored?

TWELVE : EXPELLED FROM THE EMPIRE

1

And now Dee and Kelly found a new patron and protector, Vilém Rožmberk, or William, Lord Rosenberg, to give the Germanic form of his name that Dee generally used.

Rožmberk, born fifty-one years earlier in 1535, was head of one of the most powerful Bohemian families. He was amongst Rudolf's closest associates, and had carried the crown at Rudolf's coronation in 1575. The Rožmberks were a traditional Catholic family, but William was moderate in his views, and tolerationist. His first three marriages had been into the German aristocracy; he was not narrowly nationalist. He was the senior Bohemian official, the burgrave, the right hand man of the monarch in Bohemian affairs. He had large estates in southern Bohemia. He had a palace in the Hradschin in Prague, and in 1573 had bought an adjoining one and had it turned into an arcaded garden.

Rožmberk was second only to Rudolf as a patron of alchemists, employing adepts both at his residence which adjoined Rudolf's on the Hradschin, and in his lands in southern Bohemia, centred on Krumlov. Amongst those he employed were Nicholas Reusberger, who claimed discovery of the perpetuum mobile, Christoph von Hirschberg and Claudius Syrrus. He had a large library, with a sizeable collection of alchemical manuscripts. Bavor Rodovsky produced translations of foreign texts for him in the 1570s and 80s. Nicolas Barnaud joined him in 1591. Heinrich Khunrath became his court physician later. But Rožmberk's interests were not only alchemical and esoteric. He established a magnificent orchestra at his castle at Třeboň. His brother Peter Vok Rožmberk also had strong intellectual interests which included alchemy, and corresponded with Oswald Croll. He, too, developed a substantial library.

Rožmberk was also involved in furthering mining enterprises, part of the minerals exploration that bordered on one aspect of alchemy. He had a laboratory in the castle of Reichenstein in Silesia, from which his researchers reported on alchemical, medical and esoteric matters.

Rožmberk had been a contender for the Polish throne after Henri de Valois deserted it in 1576. He had support amongst the Polish nobles, particularly as he was a descendant of the Orsinis, and, as a Bohemian, was a Slav. However, Stephen Báthory had been elected. But, like Laski, Rožmberk still had an eye on the crown.

2

April 30, 1586. 8 p.m.

Certain prayers having been poured out to God and thanks given for yesterday's miracle, we sought now from God his counsel as to what further we should do concerning that miracle, etc. And what should we do with master Rožmberk, whether we should admit him to our friendship and holy alliance? What about the offer of his house?

A voice comes down right before me,' said Kelly, 'saying, "Who is this William?"'

'You William.'

There was a pause.

'You William.'

Another pause.

'I suspect it to be the Lord Rožmberk,' said Dee.

'You William of Rožmberk.'

A greater pause.

'This day in the blood of the lamb do I pronounce forgiveness of sins upon you; and for a sign and token: your lines shall be opened and your seed shall be multiplied upon earth. Therefore take unto you a sheep, that is yet a lamb, and spoil not the flock of your poor neighbour. And behold, if you turn yourself from the north and ascend to the holy mountain, I will hereafter make a covenant with you, but take heed you do not despise me.

'Purge your houses and purge your kingdoms, if you will stir up the lord to strengthen you. The chaff of this empire and kingdom, behold it remains, the father did not sweep it out, nor does the son lift up his hand for the name of the highest.'

There was a great pause. Then the voice expounded at Dee's request.

'Behold, I have given you to Rožmberk, him also I have given to you. Whosoever therefore does not consider the giver shall be called to account, and that sharply. In the year eighty-eight I will send out my visitation that the ends of the world may be known and that justice may appear in the garments of her immeasurable honour.

'In the meantime, six actions you shall have. The seventh is the Sabbath of the lord's, and from this day, being a part of the time, beginning from Friday —'

'Which Friday?' asked Dee.

'From Good Friday last celebrated, as the memorial of him through whom I speak to you, who suffered upon the cross for your redemption, until the day come of the sixth month, you shall not presume to ask any visitation of him that speaks with you. And so the sixth month, the last day ensuing, shall always be your day of action.

'Pucci is defiled, and shall not be partaker of these six visitations to come; but shall depart from you and be ready as the lord shall find him, and as he shall be warned of you.

Notwithstanding my spirit shall not depart from him and I will open his understanding that he may convert many. For the world must be satisfied with testimony as well of his life as the recantation and professed doctrine.'

'We lack, oh lord, his recantation by his own hand,' said Dee. 'I cannot find it in the books restored.'

'Those books let them be kept of you, as committed to your custody by me. And see that they are never opened until the sixth action to come. See also that you do not disclose my hand amongst you, lest I then rise up against you. For behold, you are yet in the wilderness. Therefore be silent. Unto William notwithstanding all things may be known hereafter, and made manifest. If any other man seek you, you do not know him. For you live within the silence of the highest. The rest that is missing shall be restored to you, even to the least and last letter. Live, therefore, together as in the hands of your protector. And do not doubt but that I will be merciful to him who is sick through his infirmity, yea, and unto his generation as I have promised. And the sin which remains in his father's and in his house for many generations I will mercifully blot out. Doubt not, my peace which am peace, the beginning and the ending, shall always be amongst you.'

The sick man, Dee noted in the margin, was Adam of Newhouse, the lord chancellor. Despite heavy drunkenness and a chronic wasting disease, he was one of Rudolf's confidants. His father was brother-in-law to Rožmberk.

They read the action through and had a long talk about it, and then Dee asked, 'What shall I say to Rožmberk of your present merciful dealing and intent towards him?'

'That which is said of him, Dee, you say to him,' said the voice. 'Move no more questions.'

3

On May Day after dinner, Dee records, I went over the water, being brought to the waterside in the Lord Rožmberk's coach, and Jacob Menschik with me, to the Lord Rožmberk's gardens and lodging by the waterside, where he came to me by appointment. When I had read in Latin, extempore, the things that concerned him, I asked him what he had done since I was with him that I might better understand these words spoken to him and of him.

He said that he had often prayed since to God for the forgiveness of his sins and to open his eyes how he might serve him; and to make it evident to him whether he is to marry or not, and where, or into what stock or kindred. And if it were his divine will that he might receive comfort and instruction by me. And he had prayed also for his master the Emperor, that he

might bend himself to enjoy God's favour for his own marriage and amending his loose life. While he sat at dinner this day at the archbishop's table, his heart and thought did very much come upon it, etc.

At these words I rejoiced much to perceive the doing of the highest in hearing his prayer faithfully prayed and that the answer which I read to him was so fitly applied to his prayer, as he himself also perceived with great comfort and spiritual joy.

He entreated much that I would pray to God that the Emperor might be restored to the favour of God, as he was when I declared my message to him from the highest.

I answered that whatsoever the God of heaven and earth should appoint me to say or do to his Majesty, I most willingly rejoice in the faithful doing of it, and that it was my duty as a Christian to pray for his Majesty. But I should not make my promise of my prayer to be heard but would highly rejoice if his Imperial Majesty would so use himself in God's judgement as might be meritorious in the sight of our redeemer.

Such words and matters as this passed between us. And he said that he would in all points fulfil the advice and warning of God expressed in this action, and would marry a maiden as he was willed. And this day did acknowledge and account himself a happy man. And as concerning our mutual bond by the means of each being given to the other by God of heaven and earth, he vowed and promised that he would regard it in all points to the best of his skill and power.

These and other such good seeds for the service of God being sown between us, he went towards his palace in the court, and I to the waterside, and so over to the coach awaiting me, and so came home. God be praised.

4

Rožmberk sent Jacob Menschik with a letter to Dee.

To the great master John Dee,

Magnificent master, father of observation,

Since I have greatly desired that I may be able as often as possible to read and re-read these things to myself and always have them before my eyes, by the love of God I pray that you pass on to me the transcription at least of those words which I have reread and which pertain to me. Not only will it give me great pleasure but also I shall receive very much comfort.

I moreover beseech the Lord may pray for me constantly, that God may strengthen this which he has set working in us and may direct all counsels, works, actions and indeed all thoughts of ours to the praise and glory of his great holiness to the benefit of many and the

salvation of our souls. And may he not cease, we accord with his fatherly love, from causing your lordship as I have to be attentive to me and to advise and guide in all things which for the honour of God and your benefit by me can and should be done. It will make the matter very highly pleasing to me and worthy and in accord with my expectation.

Your son and friend from his heart,

William R.

By his own hand.

I ask that your lordship may better understand what is written and should consider my meaning more than the words, because the Latin language has not been practised by me for many years and in this matter I can go to no one for help.

May 4, Dee recorded, I had translated this Sunday morning the same parcel of the former action into Latin for the Lord Rožmberk, which he then sent for just at the time when I had finished it. And so I sent it him enclosed in a letter.

5

Tuesday, May 6, 1586 Dee set out by coach and horses provided by Lord Rožmberk towards Valkenaw Glasshouse, on a journey to Leipzig market. He arrived at Leipzig on Sunday, May 11.

I came to Leipzig and was lodged at Peter Hans Schwartz's house, he records. I found, with much ado, Laurence Overton, an English merchant, to whom my wife last year had shown no little friendship, and to Thomas his partner's servant, at the time of his lying sick in our house in Prague. He came from England in mid Lent. He confessed that Edmond my servant had often been with him at his house, and that he thought that he would come with the next ship after his coming from England, then to come within sixteen days.

I perceived by his divers express sayings that he was but a hollow friend to me, and seemed half afraid to deal either with me or my man.

There also I found a courteous gentleman called Mr Francis Evers, son of Lord Evers of the north.

Omitting all other matters in these records (those matters I mean which at Leipzig and in this journey happened notably to me, or I did myself), I cannot omit or pass without making this copy of one letter which I wrote to the Queen of England's secretary, the Right Honourable Sir Francis Walsingham.

Dee's letter to Walsingham is obscure and elusive. Was it in code? Or a code of private reference? Dee did not trust Overton who was to deliver it. But since his own servant was not

in Leipzig, he had to use Overton as the messenger. He may also have been wary of its interception by papal or imperial agents.

6

Right Honourable Sir,

Albeit I have (almost) in vain come a hundred miles (from Prague to this Leipzig mart) hoping either to meet my servant there, with answer to my former letters, sent in November last to her Majesty (when also I wrote to your honour, and divers others); and so with speed from this Leipzig to have sent again most speedily as occasion should have served; and now I find neither servant neither letter from him, neither word of mouth: yet all this notwithstanding; and whatsoever the hindrance or delay hereof be, whether the keeping back of my letters from her Majesty, or the manifold and importune, most weighty affairs public hindering or delaying her Majesty's most gracious, discreet and wise resolution herein; or what other occasion else has and does cause this long and wonderful delay of answer receiving, all this notwithstanding, I thought good, before I set up to my coach, to visit, and most humbly to salute your honour very faithfully, dutifully and sincerely, with great and the same good will, that my letter some years since written to your honour, but then a stumbling block unto your honour and other, for the strangeness of the phrases therein doth pretend, so it is, right honourable, that the merciful providence of the highest, declared in his great and abundant graces upon me, and mine, is so wonderful and mighty, that very few, unless they be present witnesses, can believe the same. Therefore how hard they are to be believed, there where all my life and doings were construed to a contrary sense, and process of death contrived and decreed against the innocent, who cannot easily judge.

I am forced to be brief. That which England suspected was also here for these two years almost (secretly) in doubt, in question, in consultation imperial and royal, by honourable spies, fawning about me, and by others discoursed upon, pried and peered into. And at length, both the chief Romish power, and imperial dignity, are brought to that point, resolutely, that partly they are sorry, of their so late reclaiming their erroneous judgement against us and of us, and seek means to deal with us, so as we might favour both the one and the other; and partly to Rome is sent for as great authority and power as can be devised, and likewise here all other means and ways contrived, how, by force, or for fear, they may make us glad to follow their humours. But all in vain, for force humane we fear not, as plainly, and often, I have to the princes declared; and otherwise than in pure verity, and godliness, we will not favour any (my words may seem very marvellous in your honour's ears; but mark the end, we have had and

shall have to deal with no babes) I have full oft and upon many of their requests and questions, referred myself to her Majesty's answer, thus, in vain, expected. The apostolic nuncio (Germanico Malaspina) after his year's suit unto me to be acquainted with me, at length had such his answer, that he is gone to Rome with a flea in his ear, that disquiets him, and terrifies the whole state Romish and Jesuitical; secretly they threaten us with violent death, and openly they fawn upon us. We know the sting of envy and the fury of the fear in tyrannical minds, what desperate attempts they have and do often undertake. But the God of heaven and earth is our light, leader and defender. To the world's end, his mercies upon us, will breed his praises, honour and glory. Thus much very rhapsodically, yet faithfully, as a word to the wise, I thought good to commit to the safe and speedy conveyance of a young merchant here called Lawrence Overton: which if it comes to your honour's hands before my servant have his dispatch, I shall or may by your honour be advertised. Your honour is sufficient from her Majesty to deal and proceed with me, if it be thought good. But if you make a council table case of it – as many men, so many opinions. And my commission from above is not so large; he who can take it, let him take it.

Sir, I trust I shall have justice for my house, library, goods and revenues, etc. Do not you disdain, neither fear to bear favour unto your poor innocent neighbour. If you send unto me Mr Thomas Digges, in her Majesty's behalf, his faithfulness to her Majesty and my well liking of the man, shall bring forth some piece of good service. But her Majesty had been better to have spent or given away in alms a million of gold than to have lost some opportunities past. No human reason can limit or determine God's marvellous means of proceeding with us. He has made of Saul (E. K.) a Paul: but yet, now and then, visited with a pang of human frailty. The almighty bless her Majesty both in this world, and eternally: and inspire your heart with some conceiving of his merciful purposes, yet, yet, not utterly cut off from her Majesty, to enjoy. From Leipzig this 14 May, 1586 at Peter Hans Schwartz's house.

Your Honour's faithful well-wisher to use and command for the honour of God and Her Majesty's best service, John Dee.

To the Right Honourable Sir Francis Walsingham Knight, her most excellent Majesty's principal secretary, my singular good friend and patron, with speed.

Unless Walsingham had already received an account of what had been going on between Dee and the apostolic nuncio, he would not have got a clear picture from this letter. Maybe that was not the real subject. Though what is referred to as 'that which England suspected, was also

here, for these two years' is far from clear either. Indeed it is not at all clear why Dee went to Leipzig, unless it was a secure place for receiving or despatching letters. It certainly appears that Dee's servant Edmond Hilton was operating as a courier between Dee and England. As for the mention of Saul (E. K.) become a Paul, does this suggest Walsingham knew Kelly, or knew of him? Why else would Dee have mentioned him?

And why did Dee ask for Thomas Digges to be sent? Digges, one of the most important of the early English Copernicans, had been Dee's pupil and close friend. In his 1573 treatise on mathematics he wrote of 'the illustrious John Dee, admirable in the rest of philosophy but most learned in these sciences, whom I venerate as a second mathematical parent to me, seeing that in my most tender age he inserted in my mind many seeds of these most sweet sciences, others formerly sown by my father he nourished and increased in the most amicable and faithful manner.' Dee returned the compliment, calling Digges a 'youth most dear to me, my most worthy mathematical heir.'

The implication is that since Dee trusted Digges some confidential information could be communicated. Was this a political matter? Or since Digges' was Dee's scientific pupil, does it suggest Dee had some experimental project in hand? Does the mention of the Queen's lost opportunities refer to a failure to support Dee and Kelly earlier? Does the mention of 'a million of gold' suggest the lost opportunity involved generating vast wealth? Were Dee and Kelly gearing up for alchemical transmutations?

8

Dee was aware of plots against him, as his letter to Walsingham shows, though he may not have known the specifics. But now disaster was imminent.

The Lutheran leader Václav Budovec recalled Dee in his memoirs in 1616. 'A learned and renowned Englishman whose name was Dr Dee came to Prague to see the Emperor Rudolf II and was at first well received by him; he predicted that a miraculous reformation would presently come about in the Christian world and would prove the ruin not only of the city of Constantinople but of Rome also. These predictions he did not cease to spread among the populace.'

They were not the sort of predictions to endear Dee to the Catholic church, and Budovec records that the apostolic nuncio stirred up Rudolf against Dee. The new nuncio, Filippo Sega, Bishop of Piacenza, and his predecessor Malaspina were two of the major figures organising the campaign to influence Rudolf against Dee and Kelly. The third was the magnate George (Jirí) Lobkovic Popel, high steward of Bohemia. A strong supporter of the Catholic church, a

powerful figure at court with growing connections with Rudolf, Lobkovic was himself to fall from favour in the mid 1590s. He was imprisoned in the dungeon of the royal prison and remained there until his death fourteen years later.

April 29, 1586, Sega reported that Dee and Kelly were important and dangerous adversaries. 'John Dee and his companion il Zoppo, the lame one, were at this court a good while ago, and are on the way to being the authors of a new superstition, not to say heresy, and are known to the Emperor and all of the court.'

Did 'il Zoppo,' the lame one, denote that Kelly was a cripple, or was it simply a contemptuous dismissal of him by a sworn enemy? It is the first recorded mention that Kelly might have been lame. A year later, in 1587, spirit says to Kelly 'I know it is troublesome for you to kneel. Sit.' And five years later, in 1591, a warrant for Kelly's arrest described him as 'so injured on one thigh that he has to use a wooden leg.' Had his leg been amputated, or did 'a wooden leg' refer to a crutch or walking stick? Had Kelly been lame or injured throughout these adventures? Or was this something that had happened in the course of his travels? It remains just one more unanswered mystery.

9

On his return from Leipzig and Valkenaw on Friday, May 24, Dee found that a document accusing him of necromancy and other prohibited arts had been submitted to the Emperor by the papal nuncio, Sega. The information was conveyed in a letter that arrived the day before his return.

It will seem perhaps a matter of wonder Domino V. that I write as an unknown to unknown. You will impute the good part of this fault to the very justified grief which I conceived from the rumour spread and reported to me on account of the D. V. I cannot sufficiently wonder at the pertinacious zeal of that beast of Babylon which leaves nothing untried, no stone that cannot be moved whereby it studies not only to injure the men of your nation who are pre-eminently pious and lovers of God, but in fact to destroy them root and branch. The eleventh day of this month having elapsed, the pontifical legate offered to his Imperial Majesty a portfolio of supplications, as they call them, in which he pretends against D. V. charges of necromancy and other prohibited arts and accuses him gravely with other calumnies. I could have had copies of this portfolio but was informed too late of this matter, nor is it safe and free of suspicion to inquire who translated it from the Italian into the Latin language. Therefore since I know certainly that all these things are vain to D. V. as they are to Christian men and philosophers, it was a pleasure to write this letter for the sake of support and

warning so that the information should be prompt and prepared for facilitating D. V. to a reply. I request therefore that you receive it in the spirit in which it is written, namely as Christian, whole and honest. Farewell, and commend me in your prayers to Christ.

Postscript: I would have sent the letter to D. V. but it was indicated to me that D. V. was travelling abroad. However, after I had learned from the noble servant of D., Bikerstein (Ferdinando Hamik) that D. V. was returning to our native land, I could not refrain from signifying what it concerned you to know in the letter.

10

Two days after returning Dee wrote to Rožmberk.

To the illustrious prince and lord, Lord William Orsini, hereditary lord of the famous house of Rožmberk in Krumlov, knight of the Golden Fleece, privy councillor of his Imperial Majesty and supreme burgrave in the kingdom of Bohemia, my lord and my worshipful patron.

Illustrious prince, nothing related to me by the mighty Lord Schönberg could be more pleasing than the news that your highness is at present enjoying good health. While I had been tossed about on my varied, diverse and complicated journey, over mountains, through valleys, through dense forests and open plains, through deep snow which we found almost impassable, always however under the protection of the most high, at length we have arrived back safe and sound with your highness's coach and horses both uninjured. For which happy outcome we pay the heartiest thanks to the most high and confess that unlimited gratitude is owed by us to your highness. While I was absent the apostolic nuncio initiated something false against us, whether believing too superficially and acting precipitately, or interpreting perversely in his own way. If they continue in this way (our experience of this has now continued for two years), those men who (common at all events) ought to surpass all in piety and wisdom, if they continue to declare themselves of all men the most envious, malicious, perverse, thirsty for human blood, proud butchers of the innocent and god-fearing in Christ, murderous slanderers, etc., truly, I say, we shall be compelled to shake the dust from our shoes and take ourselves into other parts of the world. And unless we should have that consideration on the part of your highness which we need, and unless we can consider ourselves more or less protected by your highness's armed guard of some sort, apart from that invincible, invisible army of God, the best and greatest, we should be compelled straightway to depart from this kingdom. His Imperial Majesty should also ensure that in some fashion and very promptly there may be a demonstration to this whole kingdom that we two are not only true Catholics but also lovers of true Christian piety and peace. There is no need for me to say more in this letter in the fervour of my spirit. But let us diligently and circumspectly have regard, in the other, for the inesti-

mable gift of God which he has conferred on both. For we are as it were three. But in one God we should be, as it were, one man. Note this mystery. J. D. E. K. W. R. For he who has me has also E. K. and he whom I have as mine, he also is to be regarded as belonging to my E. K. May the omnipotent God who created all unite to us your illustrious highness, the co-minister and co-worker of his divine justice and glory and long preserve you.

Prague, May 26, 1586, the most faithful servitor in Christ of your illustrious highness,
John Dee.

11

Two more days passed, and Dee wrote to the Emperor.

For some weeks now, unconquered and gracious Caesar, various rumours have been ringing in our ears, that certain grave and deadly accusations are being prepared against me and my associate. They are to be presented or already have been presented to your sacred Imperial Majesty, and moreover that your sacred Imperial Majesty has already been brought almost to the point of conceiving some bad, and to us dangerous, opinion about us. To your sacred Imperial Majesty, therefore, we most humbly supplicate your sacred Imperial Majesty that by the interposition of your imperial authority you may graciously deign to cause the pamphlets of whomsoever that are published against us to be accurately transcribed word for word and delivered to us. For thus, by gathering our replies to the accusation trumped up against us, his sacred Imperial Majesty may understand very quickly and clearly what, in what has been sent to him, he can or should judge or decide with justice to the honour of God and the profit of the Christian state. And we are most certain about this, with the favour of God, because up to now and for too long by the negligence of some men and contrary to our wish, it has been hidden. We both can be far more useful and pleasing to the person of your sacred Imperial Majesty and to the Christian state than all our adversaries, no matter how many are here present, if the truth itself will teach directly to your Majesty's own ears, if it could have that favour, that God etc., may graciously be able to be heard. May he abundantly enlighten your sacred Imperial Majesty with grace, and with his extended arm against the frightful enemies of Christ render the Emperor wholly triumphant. Amen.

12

The letter achieved nothing. On the following day, May 29, Rudolf issued an order banishing Dee, his family, and Kelly from the Emperor's kingdoms, dukedoms, etc, with a mere six days notice. It was delivered to Dee by a clerk of the imperial chancery on May 30.

Once again Dee and Kelly were on the road, this time impelled not by spirit but by

imperial banishment. They went first to Erfurt, and then Dee visited Kassel, where Wilhelm, Landgrave of Hesse-Kassel had his court. A staunch opponent of the Catholic counter-reformation, the Landgrave was one of the stronger Protestant rulers, one of the few, Philip Sidney had assessed in 1577, who had a firm commitment to the idea of a Protestant league. He was also a well known patron of thinkers and scholars, with interests in Hermeticism, while his son Moritz had a particular interest in alchemy. Dee presented a pamphlet on the secrets of God related to the apocalypse and announced that he looked forward to a 'restorer of the house of Israel to his wanted terrestrial globe.' He had not ceased expressing those predictions of religio-political change that had got him expelled from the Empire.

At some point Dee's manuscript of the *Corpus Alchimisticum* was acquired by the Landgrave's library. Did the Landgrave help Dee in his search for somewhere to live? Was the manuscript presented as a gift of gratitude? Or did Dee sell it to raise funds for their expenses? Or was it perhaps acquired at some later date by Moritz rather than Wilhelm? It still survives in the Landesbibliothek in Kassel.

June 14, Ferdinand of Tyrol wrote to Rožmberk from Innsbruck, wanting to know more about Dee. Whether or not Dee and Kelly were now looking for support or patronage from the Landgrave or from Frederick, they were not totally bereft: Rožmberk was still in contact with them.

13

Walsingham was soon told of the events. A letter dated June 15, 1586 from his informant Sir Horatio Palavicino, contained this enigmatic sentence.

'The bearer will tell you verbally about Doctor Dee and "Kele" banished from the States of the Emperor, at the instance of the Papal nuncio.' It is a single sentence included amongst lots of other specific information. Were the details felt to be too sensitive to be conveyed by letter, so sensitive that they could only be transmitted verbally?

Palavicino was a Genoese banker and merchant whose fortune was based on the European alum monopoly. From 1580 to 1592 he was the English government's financial agent in European dealings. He worked closely with Burghley, providing a conduit of finance for diplomatic, espionage and other expenditures, and he was a high level source of information for both Burghley and Walsingham. He was in Europe at this point attempting to arrange for the German princes to contribute funds to an army to invade France, in an attempt to counteract the spread of Spanish and Catholic power in Europe. Such English intervention into European

affairs was a sensitive issue, and when a list of the contributing German princes was published, Rudolf flew into a rage. It was the sort of covert action that, once revealed, would not have endeared wandering, expatriate Englishmen like Dee and Kelly to Rudolf.

14

June 18, 1586, in Erfurt, to which the most distinguished Lord Rožmberk had sent John Carpio to us with his letter, particularly that he might understand the will of God concerning his future wife, and about other things. I was then at Kassel in Hesse, Dee records, and Edward Kelly was at Erfurt.

Kelly, concerning questions and requests from Illustrissimus (Rožmberk) had been commanded from above to place a clean sheet of paper above the altar before the priest celebrating mass in the morning in the monastery of the minor order of St Francis between the hours of 6 and 7, June 18, the senior monk celebrating the mass. At the end of the mass the things which follow were found beautifully written on the sheet. But on the following day, after they had been copied for the illustrious prince, immediately they all vanished line and letter and nothing remained visible in the sheet afterwards.

‘William, because you have joined your hand with me, I have appointed you a David to slay Goliath ...

‘Use the world, therefore, to my glory and hold yourself upright in me to place my justice in its rightful seat and to trample down and then uproot the unjust and contemptible pride of those who have put my faith as a footstool of blasphemy and abomination.

‘You will be blessed in the fortitude of my hand and spirit because I have heard. Do not therefore neglect the time of your visitation, but tremble with zeal and bitterest indignation and receive the virgin as your wife, conjoined with your house, as prepared for your loins and old age and cherish her with love and fondle her with affection that my proffered blessing on you and in her may become manifest.

‘Therefore beware that you do not through your negligence or fear so allow my servants whom I have provided for your help to be snatched from your hands or as sheep from your sheepfold by wicked arts and iniquity. For who will take away that which was given by me? Think therefore and attend with watchfulness what hitherto has been ... For I shall break the reins of Satan and our enemies.’

15

Dee wrote a memorandum of the events surrounding his expulsion by Rudolf and Pucci’s

part in them.

Be remembered that Mr Francis Pucci, Florentine, whom at my going to Leipzig I left in our house at Prague, in the meantime had been at Frankfurt am Main, and went from Prague about the same day that the Bishop of Piacenza, apostolic nuncio, exhibited to the Emperor a libel against us of most horrible untruths.

In the meanwhile, and before his return to Prague, again it happened so that the 30 May last I received the Emperor's commandment, I, my companion, and all mine to depart within six days out of Prague and consequently out of all his kingdoms, dukedoms and lands.

Which we did, and were come to Erfurt in Thuringia, and sometime to Kassel whither we had removed our goods and family by reason the senators of Erfurt would give us no leave to hire any house there as both by the Lord Schönberg in the name of the Lord Rožmberk I was assayed, with repulse received, and also again by me and E. K. proved, July 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.

And on Tuesday, June 15 Dr Kurz brought upward from the senate that they could not grant our request, yet notwithstanding if the Lord Rožmberk would again send to them in the matter they would think better upon the matter, etc.

Now remember that Francis Pucci came to Erfurt on Thursday after our supper, July 10, on horse-back on a horse which he had bought at Naumburg fair, etc.

July 11 he discoursed with E. K. and me that he thought we might obtain favour to return to Prague again if we would. That he had found this apostolic nuncio more courteous than Malaspina, of whom he reported also that it was credibly informed him that he was sore offended that we gave him no more honourable tide in our speeches to him than your most reverend father.

This Pucci framed the discourse of his talk to persuade us to think well of this Bishop of Piacenza, that he was charitable towards us and sorrowful that we were so uncourteously used, that he meant nothing else in his suit to the Emperor against us but that we might be examined and that being found faulty we should be sent to Rome, but after he had begun to move against us, he found the Emperor more eagerly bent against us than he himself was.

Note. The Lord Rožmberk told us that when he on our behalf advised the Emperor of his error committed in our extermination, the Emperor answered that this nuncio from his first audience urged so vehemently against us, and also the Pope had sent commandment by letter to him to deliver us and send us to Rome, that he was forced in manner to do as he did. But if the commandment of his decree were to be made again that it should not pass, or if this apostolic nuncio had not sent this decree away to Rome that he should not send it, etc. This I note in

respect of the contrariety in the nuncio's assertion, and the Emperor's, of our so hard usage.

The aforesaid July 11 the foresaid Fr Pucci, to prove this his intended persuasion of the nuncio's good meaning toward us and to make us believe that great benefit would ensue from our going to Rome, brought forth to us a writing of his own hand which he read to us, and at the hearing of it we mused much for many causes. I asked him then why the nuncio had not subscribed this writing.

'It is all one,' said he for that.

'Has he heard this read?' I asked.

'Yes, he has heard me read this three several times to him,' he said. 'And if you like it, he says, where his power does not serve him to perform as much as is specified in the writing, he will make and use means to have it from his holiness.'

'Well,' I said, 'take a copy of this Mr Kelly,' for I was riding towards Saalfeld about getting a house.

Thereupon he said he consented.

'But I think it meeter to save and keep the original itself,' said E. K.

'Well,' said Pucci.

And so the original was delivered to E. K.

16

After 10 o'clock the same Friday, July 11, after breakfast, Dee records, I rode toward Saalfeld about the house of the Earl Albert of Schwartzenberg. But after I was out of Erfurt until my return again I was so sore vexed in mind to think of Pucci's return to our company, as well for his unquiet nature in disputations as for his blabbing our secrets without our leave, or well liking, or doing any good thereby, either in God's service or our credit, but rather the contrary ensuing, albeit not of his intent, but by either his indiscreet handling of it or of his undue hearers of him, etc.; and also for his household behaviour, not acceptable to our wives and family; and also because we were warned that he should be cut off from our company, etc.

And chiefly now to consider that he had laid such a bait for us with our mortal enemy to entrap us by fair fawning words which by no means the Emperor would consent to do before his authority but rather to put us out of his kingdoms, etc.

And imagining that he was a mighty explorator upon us, for this apostolic nuncio and his adherents, that now he might perceive what we had done hitherto, what we were doing, and what we intended to do; and considering that he urged at our hands an answer to the former writing, wherein also lay a trap for either in not answering it, or refusing to grant some points

of it, or in our consenting to the whole, this nuncio would put matter against us to our great disadvantage.

Thus being tormented in mind in my absence, how we might be rid of this Fr Pucci by quiet and honest means, I devised to write to this nuncio to know if this writing were of his contriving only, or of Pucci's contriving only, or jointly, or if at the least the writing were according to his will and offer to us, and so to send him away; wherein he could make no refusal, I intending not to make him privy of the content of my letter. And in the meantime of his absence I hoped that some good way and better means would appear or fall out whereunto we might trust, etc. Thus I note my imagination and discourses in the time of my absence.

17

I returned to Erfurt 5 p.m., July 13, Dee records.

I found Fr Pucci desirous to have answer to the foresaid writing, and very much persuading this Roman voyage, using arguments out of our actions, as that God said we should go to Rome in a certain month's space, that we ought to obey the Roman bishop, and to love him, etc.

I replied and said that he was not to urge God upon any of his sayings to us, but to refer all to his most free disposition, his will was to be done not ours, God was not bound to us, etc.

He answered very vehemently, and often, that God is bound to us and God said that we would go to Rome, and I believe and shall believe and otherwise shall not believe unless God shall have said to us not.

'Well,' we said, 'God has delivered his meaning to us in that phrase which we also devise you of, that it is not meant (by the speech) that we shall corporally go to Rome,' and so I broke off that his reasoning. And told him that we marvelled that he should urge this Roman voyage so violently and eagerly more than we, it appertained to us as much as to him, etc.

The same day I told him that he had heretofore offended God with his curiosity in our affairs otherwise than appertained to his calling, and he may well remember his repentance therein and his forgiveness obtained. But that now he had offended much more in curiosity and half in conspiracy against us with our mortal enemy this apostolic nuncio, upon whom he fawned, in whose favour he is, who joins counsels with him in our affairs, who dares prescribe us what we have to do in so weighty affairs as our journey to Rome, who has framed a bill accusing us confusedly of heresy and wicked magic, both falsely in one part and dangerous to life and infamous at the least in the other, and hereto requires, urges and in manner in God's

name argues by our actions past, obedience. And therefore he has separated himself from us and has set himself against us, etc.

With great vehemency he said he intended nothing but well to us, and was explorator with this nuncio for our behalf.

‘We require none,’ I said, ‘neither do we need any, for God sees all and does all for our benefit, if we will constantly love and serve him.’

To be brief, he would seem to be worthy to be thought well of for his zealous good will and fidelity towards us in all his doings and sayings, the truth of which God knows, to whom we commit the cause between him and us.

18

The copy of the writing before specified.

If Mr John Dee, Mr Edward Kelly and Fr Pucci will wish to go to Rome in order to confer with the supreme pontiff concerning his revelations, venerating him as successor of Saint Peter and illustrious and holy vicar of Christ on earth, the Bishop of Piacenza, the apostolic nuncio with the Imperial Majesty will give to them letters of commendation so that along the whole journey and in Rome they may be treated with the greatest consideration and kindness and assisted in their necessities. And furthermore by his apostolic authority he will absolve them and free them from every fault and penalty which they had merited in their previous life because of the practice of the magic arts, false opinions spread or invented by them, by words or by writing, or by other means, because of prohibited books read or written, or because of any other charge of which they might be accused in the holy court of the inquisition, or in the court which they call contentiosus, or in any other court of pontifical jurisdiction; that no one, for any sin or crime however atrocious which they have committed before undertaking this journey, should ever make an issue of it with them or be troublesome to them or in any way presume to question or to accuse them.

19

For the better ground of any manner of making answer to this, Dee records, I asked the same Fr Pucci after supper, Tuesday, July 15, (forasmuch as I had framed a letter for answer to the pith of the letter or writing here recorded), whether this letter were written and sent to us by the consent of the apostolic nuncio to know our answer in, or not.

He seemed to be unwilling now directly to affirm the nuncio’s consent.

We replied that he had already told us that he had read it thrice over to the said nuncio, and

that he liked well of it, and marvelled that now he would make strange to affirm the same again, seeing I had now, according to his purpose, written a plain and perfect humble answer to the same letter, and much more matter, true and needful for this nuncio to know.

‘Well,’ he said, ‘thus far it is by his consent, if you wish to go to Rome he will provide those things which are contained in this letter.’

‘Well,’ I said, in Latin you must understand my talk with him in the same sense here in English recorded, ‘if he mean well to us, and in charity unfeigned, he will not be offended with my answer.’

20

Dee’s reply to the apostolic nuncio, ‘these few lines I have not unwillingly set down,’ as he put it, was another lengthy effusion. ‘I shall not be able to describe the continuous and intense course of my life of forty years’ pursuing truth,’ he assured the Bishop of Piacenza. Nonetheless he offered a brief history of recent events.

‘Some years ago, directed from above and therefore summoned from England, not only by the powerful hand of almighty God, miraculously we escaped from many perils of the sea, and also from a variety of men who were fraudulent and truculent towards us, and our life freed from plots ...

‘Behold now, however, we who are considered legitimate sons of our holy mother, the holy Catholic church, we his brothers, living in all moderation, quiet, peace and civil justice among them in their presence in Prague, suddenly they contrived for us to be sent out by imperial mandate into a kind of exile.’

The cause behind the expulsion was not made public, Dee complained. ‘But by the common people alone and by palace gossip divulged to us, we understood that by a certain pamphlet shown through you to his Imperial Majesty, the highest indignation, virtually flames of anger, were ignited in the Emperor.’

As a result, an imperial order was issued ‘that within six days, I, my consort, our wives, all our children and even our infant Michael, born and baptized in Prague, and still clinging to his mother’s breast, also my servants and maids, in short all my own, and house servants, should remove from Prague itself and so consequently from the whole kingdom of Bohemia and any other kingdoms of his sacred Majesty, dukedoms, and lands, never to return to them under peril of the infliction of terrible punishment.

‘We, making no delay, have prepared ourselves faithfully and humbly to obey this command of the Emperor. Our goods and furniture, the equipment of our journeyings, both

scholarly and domestic, we have had put in two large coaches. Of the rest of our possessions we have given one part to friends and dispersed and distributed to the poor.

‘A part, however, for reasons not displeasing to God, on the April 10th before our departure, you should know by divine command we destroyed the best part from the face of the earth, when we had been forewarned by heaven of the whole affliction and our persecution and other things yet to come. We committed them to the light-filled flames of fire, the best part of the same, which no natural or common fire was able to injure or to consume, by visible angelic ministry they were received from these highest flames into the divine, angelic and invisible protection. The great thesaurus of divine books then and in the same place, by the diligent work of the two living witnesses, was totally changed into ashes and embers; and as it were due to receive renovation, restoration and a kind of regeneration or resurrection even by divine hand at the opportune time.’ The altar was left intact.

Then they entered on their transmigration. ‘And not yet having stepped out of the borders of the Roman empire we dispose our steps thus, and for the rest God favouring and guiding shall dispose them, that to the whole Christian world it may plainly appear that we can bear these things of whatever kind with patience, or at least wish to do so, and that we are fully prepared to render to God those things that are God’s and to Caesar those that are Caesar’s, that we are most obedient and most humble sons of the sacrosanct Catholic church and of the supreme Roman pontiff and of other Catholic ecclesiastical leaders, in Christ and for Christ ...

Dee asked ‘that a just estimate may be had of our innocence, sincerity and loyal behaviour before God and men in the republic of Bohemia, and complete restitution of my honourable fame and reputation, without which I do not wish even to live.’

21

This letter being written, Dee records, and read to E. K. and well liked by him for the quiet and modest course kept in it, otherwise, as he said to Fr Pucci, than he would have used, or had used in a letter which he had also written, but now would not send, thinking that my foresaid letter might suffice for our cause, he talked with Fr Pucci of this letter which Fr Pucci said he would gladly see and read, which E. K. told him that I was not minded to let him read it. Then, he said, he would not carry it.

Hereupon in talk with Fr Pucci, speaking of this letter, I told him that I had written a letter with sufficient answer in general to the nuncio’s request and offer by him brought to us in writing, and in sum told him the chief content of the letter.

‘Then,’ said he, ‘whereas you write of the books burnt, why do you not write to him of the

recovery of them, as I now perceive by you both that they are restored? And it shall be a disgrace to you if the nuncio shall understand more by others than by yourself.'

'Thereof have I no care,' said Dee. 'What I have written I have written, and I know the truth of my writing. And they are not all restored that I know of. And whatsoever he has at my hands he may be assured is true. Whatsoever he shall hear otherwise, the record of that cannot be so good unless our record consent thereunto.'

'Then,' he said, 'why do you write of burning those books, being done before your coming away? It is as if you wrote backward.'

'Have you no care, Mr Pucci, for the method of my letters,' I said.

And I said further, 'It is told me that unless you see my letters you will not carry them. You shall pardon me for seeing them, the content I have sufficiently told you. And if you will not deliver them, I can get them delivered other ways, or I may omit sending them and write such a letter to the nuncio that I had written answer to his request and offer sent by Fr Pucci, but he would not bring my said letter unless he might have sight of it himself.'

At length by further discourse with E. K., he became resolved to go with the letter and, by E. K.'s order, was to receive fifty dollars from John Carpio, so that he should not be destitute of money in Prague.

This day Francis Pucci said to us both, 'How can you doubt my fidelity towards you whom I love as my own life, and against this monster of Rome, whom my chief desire is and long has been that he may be overthrown, etc.'

Again, consider what fidelity, obedience and severance he has promised to the Pope, and this nuncio, as the writing brought by him, and so sore and many ways urged by him for us to accept, can specify.

Therefore Fr Pucci is false to the Pope, or us, or both, or rash, foolish, blind, etc. And, as our spiritual schoolmaster several times terms him, leprous.

Therefore I commit his doings to the judgement of God. But also it is greatly to be remembered and noted that he now also discoursed again with E. K. as concerning the birth of Christ, that it could not be proved by the Scriptures that Christ came of the line of David, unless he were begotten of the actual copulation of Joseph and Mary, and said that, because it was the gift of the Holy Ghost, that as Joseph's first and only carnal copulation with Mary, Christ was conceived. Therefore she was accounted in manner a virgin according to the Jew's doctrine.

When I heard this heresy of his I trembled for the horror of so manifest a heresy against evident Scripture, he was conceived of a virgin and born of a virgin, etc., and against many other most plain and sufficient authorities both of Scriptures and also histories of our lady's

examination made by women, and that she was found a virgin, etc. And at her conception her answer to the angel, *quia virum non congnavi*, etc., *et antequam convenirent, iuventa est in utero habens de spiritu sancto*, etc.

It is evident by this that this Pucci is very leprous, both in his heresy (what others he is infected with, God knows) and also the former proven infidelity.

22

Dee added a postscript to his account: Remember that Fr Pucci the morning before his going required of me our testimonial letters to our friends of his fidelity towards us.

‘What needs that?’ I said. ‘For as much as your deeds were as well known to them as to us, your own conscience to yourself may serve abundantly. But our several friends, who have warned us of you and have marvelled why we would suffer you any longer in our house and company, would neither credit our letters as yet in this cause, and would also condemn us of light judgement or great blindness to judge the cause between you and us.’

But truly I observed in him now a more proud presuming over us than before when he was sore rebuked for over-crossing us, so as he began to do.

Now he said he had as great authority as we to publish any of our secrets, at his discretion. That he ought to eat bread with us.

That he understood our books of actions better than we.

That he did not need our consent or counsel to deal with the Pope’s nuncio. He did it by his general duty, or charity, etc.

He offered to order the nuncio and the Emperor to reclaim the decree made against us.

As a member of Dee’s household, Pucci was included in Rudolf’s expulsion order. How then could he risk returning to Prague? It was a discrepancy that worried Dee.

Consider what this may import, that the decree touching him, being one of my household company and of them that did appertain to me, and whose name he is not afraid of one way, and another way not abashed to thrust himself into the whole body of our revelations, as a principle fellow or receiver of them, by the first he ought to be afraid of the danger of the decree which banished us, unless he is assured of their goodwill who have shown themselves our mortal enemies, or else some other cause emboldened him to some other purpose, etc. By the second he might be afraid of so great presumption, being but a probationer, not yet allowed of, and to us known to be cut off. All these points I cannot decipher and judge but refer them to the profound wisdom and high providence of God, wherefore and how far he has admitted him to be privy of our actions and so a witness to some purpose sufficient. All things to be to the

honour and glory of God. Amen.

23

On Thursday, July 17, Dee records, Fr Pucci entered his voyage toward Prague with my letter to the apostolic nuncio, and with letters to John Carpio from E. K., and with my letters enclosed to the Lord Rožmberk. And we entered on our journey toward Kassel, but that night we rode only three miles, to Gotha, our horses were so ill that we hired, and therefore sending them back again the next day, we hired a coach, etc.

24

The apostolic nuncio, Filippo Sega, replied to Dee on July 28.

Mighty lord,

On reading your letter I was surprised to find that your were of the opinion and belief that I had been a hindrance to you and your 'consort' by my services with the Emperor, since I know that I am so forward both by religion and nature as to desire to do the maximum benefit to everybody and to do disservice to no one. As to the fact of my doing my duty, this should not be interpreted as a fault in me. Seeing that I am a mere interpreter between the supreme Pontiff and the Emperor, I do not see what assistance I can offer in this business of yours.

My advice, however, is that you demonstrate your innocence concerning the Catholic faith, and concerning the conversations and presence of angels which you say are visible to you, in the presence of the supreme Pontiff and the apostolic see, in accord with the decree of the Lateran council, and thus make your explanations so that what you think cannot be ambiguous to anyone, and with the approval of the apostolic see your faith can be demonstrated safely, independently of all your angelic assertions, and then at length the mouths of carping critics will be shut.

I do not think this advice will seem to you too serious if you possess the same purity and constancy in the Catholic faith as you assert you have sincerity, integrity of life and innocence in your present communion with angels ...

But Dee and Kelly were not inclined to fall into the trap of visiting Rome to be examined. That was a visit from which they might never return.

25

It is not clear when Dee and Kelly arrived at Kassel, nor how long they stayed. But it was not for long. On August 8, Rudolf granted to Rožmberk a licence for them to return to Bohemia

to live at any of Rožmberk's 'towns, cities, castles, etc.'

An informant of Walsingham's, Roger Edwards, wrote to him two days later, August 10, 1586, with a batch of European news. Amongst it he remarked, 'The Emperor lies most at Prague, in very mean state, not inclined to marry, but wholly given to liberty of life. The chief of his council consists of three or four Spaniards and an Italian, by whom he is in heart made more malicious towards the Religion than were any of his ancestors.'

It may have been that Rudolf, in allowing Dee and Kelly to return to Bohemia, was signalling reasonableness to England. In July he had written complaining that English military forces in Holland had entered into territories of the Empire, and had overrun certain cities and robbed, spoiled and wasted lands there. But the letter did not reach England until September, so no response would have been received at this point.

It may be that his change of heart related not to English politics, but to his worsening relationship with the nuncio, who was predicting total ruin, and complaining about the dilatoriness and irregularity of Rudolf's administration. But Rudolf kept him at a distance and never confided in him. A major rift between them developed when Rudolf's decrees allowing an ecclesiastical visitation of the church in Bohemia were overruled by the Catholic hierarchy which insisted that a Papal bull was necessary; and when the nuncio published the encyclical *In Coena Domini* without his permission, Rudolf was incensed and was only with difficulty persuaded not to press for his recall.

And there is always the possibility that the original expulsion order had not been wholly hostile in intent, but designed to save Dee and Kelly from being forcibly taken to Rome.

Whatever the reasons, Dee and Kelly and their households were allowed to return, and on September 14, 1586 they arrived at Rožmberk's castle at Třeboň in southern Bohemia.

26

Pucci wrote a long, Latin letter to Dee and Kelly from Prague, dated October 15, recounting his activities there.

'From the time of my departure from you and throughout the journey, which I completed in eight days after selling my horse at Leipzig, my spirit was no little vexed while I rehearsed in my mind in how many ways Satan had tried and will not cease to attempt to retard the divine work and to separate our union by the use of external and internal contrivances and weapons.'

After a number of lines in this vein, he told them, 'I have resolved to embark on the austere life and not to approach the lavish tables of friends but to eat alone the bread of sorrow, that I may not be in better condition than you who are grievously afflicted in order that the most

munificent God as soon as possible may restore you entirely and recall us together to the customary conversations and pious exercises that by a mutual agreement we may lift our spirits each one of us by most holy words. The lord gives me hope of being able to follow this way so that I may prove to you and to others more easily my fidelity and avoid many temptations which easily assail us as men of this world. Therefore unless under pressure of necessity or public business, I avoid all gatherings and the style of living of palaces and in this way try to make myself less incapable of prayer.'

Then he reported on his visit to the nuncio, Sega.

'I arrived on July 24 at nightfall. I immediately went to the illustrious lord nuncio to whom I handed your letter which he appeared to receive with joyful countenance. But there was not leisure for talk since, supper being ready, he wished to sit down to it. Being put off to the following day I betook myself to Mr Carpio, but learned that he had been sent to you four days before and had departed. I was very sorry that he had not come to meet me both because of your letter and because of my own, since he bore also certain papers to me. But what most worried me was my anxiety about the letter to the illustrious Lord Rožmberk which I knew to be enclosed in the letter of Mr Carpio, and I did not dare open it or pass it on to anyone else since it was clearly inscribed to his own hand.'

The following day he called on the nuncio, who was with an Italian Jesuit.

'I was genially received by both and bidden to sit and I was given no little praise by the Jesuit on the score of candour and openness.'

Then a discussion was entered into 'as to establish that the certainty of seeing and hearing the lord or his angel does not depend upon the approval of the church nor is the reason of its revelation to be sought from it so long as he dares to exercise nothing by way of public presentation, but if he begins to publish it openly, that is that he has been taught and sent by God, so that it is not a matter for him alone but also for others to know by what spirit he is motivated, then it is a matter for churchmen to examine the spirit of his – examine it and approve it – nor is he rightly able to avoid this inquiry, even though he is minimally held to subject his revelations to them.'

Pucci basically seemed to be summarising the nuncio's opinions. He writes, 'This was proved by the decree of the Lateran council of which he makes mention in his letter and further more there is the history of Saint Francis who, first expelled by Pope Innocent, was soon recalled when in sleep he appeared in rags to the pontiff supporting the Lateran church on his shoulders. He will in addition add that men of God are not to be deterred by a first or second repulse. He said that sometimes such a mode of repelling was used in order to prove the spirit

and constancy of those who proposed new and great things.’

Pucci assured Dee that he had told the nuncio ‘you thus far have not tried to perform public display and have confined yourself with the greatest moderation within your walls.’

The nuncio however cited Dee’s audiences with the King of Poland, with the Emperor, and with the Spanish ambassador as evidence ‘that you are labouring at something greater than private, and so the supreme pontiff sitting in his watchtower over the whole Christian world’ was properly concerned.

‘What is more, by reason of your consummate skill in recondite arts and sciences, you may easily impose upon the people and the ignorant. Since you are great astrologers, he said, and it is easy for you to have the horoscopes of princes, and furthermore you are very clever in the magic arts, with no difficulty invoking the name of angels and proposing those things which might emanate from the spirit of the church, therefore the supreme pontiff, to whom those two princes are most of all to be observed, given that they live and reign among heretics, the supreme pontiff has prudently acted in ordering that inquiry should be made into your conduct and doctrine.

‘It happened despite his demand and wish that you were expelled with cause unheard. He grieved for our mishap, and is prepared to exert his efforts so that you may be able to justify yourselves, and so he has urged me that I should go in haste to the illustrious Lord Rožmberk and signify to him his good disposition towards you. For he may easily obtain from the supreme pontiff that your cause should be made known here, and if he favours you as hitherto he has, he will be your help in all offices.’

Pucci went straight to Rožmberk. ‘But I had to return four times before being admitted. Admitted on the 27th, I explained my cause on your behalf and how the illustrious lord nuncio was affected towards you and at length I asked that he would not desert that defence which he had undertaken of the expelled foreigners, who might invite Caesar less well informed to become a Caesar better informed, and desired their innocence proved before God and men.

‘He kindly answered that you were not especially known to him. He had conversed twice with the elder and once only with the younger man, and had judged you learned and pious and instructed in outstanding gifts. He thought this had happened to you through some bad report; the sort of problem to which the affairs of princes are subject; that it was your part to bear with patience; he did not regret that he had favoured you, and if he knew what especially it was you requested from him, he would lend his efforts to have your prayers answered.

‘Then I decided to say something about the high hopes which you had conceived of him, and how you had sent me away not without letters to him; but they were included in the bundle

for Mr John Carpio, which I immediately produced, and when he replied that Mr Carpio would not be displeased if I gave them to him, I handed the bundle to him, and he said that he would read it at his leisure and answer me the following day.'

Pucci then returned to the nuncio.

'I began a long conversation with him about the signal wrong done to you. I set out how greatly you laboured that you might be able to take your place in Catholic churches and how brutally and inhumanly you were treated in the hospices and cities by reason of this prejudgement of the Emperor. And I explained in what sordid and narrow place you housed your family, and how you fear your furniture and books will not be safe. I told him how Mr Dee, advanced in years and in fact an old man, one who had borne nothing like this hitherto, was in distress. His troubles were not to be considered like those of a common, simple man, since a man in his fifties with four sweet young children of whom the eldest is no older than seven years and a beloved wife, such a man is far more heavily affected for his beloved wife and dear offspring than for himself. How great an obstacle this would be to English Catholics and to others, and how great a handle would be offered to heretics for railing against the ecclesiastical order.'

The nuncio read Dee's letter to Pucci. 'He heard from me the eyewitness of this burning of books, and how I heard from you that they had been miraculously restored, and in the end concluded there were many laudable things in that letter, many admirable things, and likewise many incredible things. But since nothing is impossible to God, he suspended his assent and did not wish anything by way of certainty to be pronounced while the matter was not thoroughly examined. To you, however,' Pucci told Dee, 'he said he would make a kind reply and give me a letter, which he did, on the following day, which I sent to you along with this. And he gave me the opportunity of reading it.'

The nuncio repeated to Pucci 'that in this case he was a mere interpreter between Pope and Emperor and cannot except by the words of his Lord promise or decide anything. Therefore, as far as I can see the matter will be dragged out longer than we might wish.'

Pucci was now having trouble in meeting Rožmberk again. 'On the 28th and 29th I found the illustrious Lord Rožmberk so occupied that I was not able to be admitted but he signified through his chamberlain he urgently wished that we should talk. I should therefore return on the 30th. In the meantime I was again with the illustrious nuncio who was soon to depart for the monastery of Saint Charles where he will remain as long as these summer heats rage.'

They had a discussion about how to distinguish spirits of God from evil spirits, which Pucci reported at some length. It ended unsatisfactorily.

‘He said that it was up to me to decide about this matter, “I do not wish at this time to declare my opinion, but the reasoning of this sort does not appear to me bad.” From these words it seemed to me somehow I was addressed less openly than I ought to have been in such a great matter.

‘Returning on the 30th to the illustrious Lord Rožmberk, I saw him at length finally coming out of his bedroom to certain nobles and he said he was very heavily engaged so that he could not speak with me as he wished. I said that having returned so often at the advice of his highness, I expected his reply, and to know whether he was going to write back to us. Then he said first that I should converse with you and, to use his own words, “Have patience for some days until I send for you,” and thus dismissed me.

‘I therefore informed Wenceslaus, the chamberlain, of my house. He said that he knew the place very well and at the right time would be mindful of me when the Lord should summon me. Expecting, therefore, either the reply of the illustrious Lord Rožmberk or something else worthy of your ears, I did not think it right to send a messenger express to you, on the advice of Lord Suarrenburg particularly, that some house was prepared for you in the town of Naitu in the district of Suarrenburg, and that I should await the return of Mr Carpio who, he hoped, would return very soon, lest I should direct letters to you without good reason, and be uncertain of the place where you were living. Not a little troubled about you and about the return of Mr Carpio, I have been going once a day at least to his house and asking if there was any news of him but I have heard nothing for many days.

‘At length on August 12 I enquired of Mr Miller whether he could tell me anything about his friend. He replied that he was also awaiting him and was very surprised at the lengthy day, especially when Mr Gregory, who had come to us in the name of this Carpio, had returned on the third day.

‘I, who previously knew nothing of Mr Gregory, either of his journey or his return, went straight to him. Gallus, his house companion, admitted me kindly and had me wait for the Doctor and ran to summon him. But when he delayed a long time, I, by now ready to depart, saw Mr Gregory talking apart with him and looking at me with an ugly expression. I greeted him and congratulated him on his return and at length asked about you.

‘He answered that he knew nothing about you or your affairs and was not with you. Then I persisted a little and finally said that if he were unwilling to say anything I would bear it patiently, but I was now convinced that he had been with you. He became angry at your name and at the deceits and impostures of the whole world. He said that his own matters were his concern, and yours did not promise you much but offered little, and he did not know why you

were complaining. For a year and a half, nourished by vain hope, he had clung to you that he might learn something of your lesser secrets, but had not found anything of any importance.

‘Here I said, “Does that secret remedy against the pox seem small?”

‘He said, with a smile, “I have had it long before this from Dun Scotus.”’

Pucci then asked for the return of his book of *Pastella*, but Gregory denied having it.

‘I was not willing to bandy words with him, and departed. And meeting your boy Stanislaus in the hall, I heard from him that you had come as far as Erfurt with Mr Gregory and Mr Carpio eight days earlier.

‘I asked whether he bore a letter or a word or two from you to me.

‘He replied, “Nothing at all, because they thought that you were probably not here.”

‘He was to return to you after three or four days. I praised his intention and constancy in serving you and I told him the whereabouts of my house so that he should not come to you without my letter. He promised that he would not depart without saying goodbye.

‘Mr Gregory in the meantime saw that I was talking with him and, angry, as far as I could judge from his raised voice, he called the boy back. I departed deep in thought.

‘On the 15th of this month, having at length got hold of your young servant Stanislaus in a free place, I carefully examined him about your affairs and condition, and, not without great pleasure to my mind, I heard that you had been granted an adequate place to live. The illustrious Landgrave attributed much to the distinguished Mr Dee and I render great thanks to the highest God for such a gift, and I took the boy to my room and showed him the letter prepared for you lest he returned to you without it. But a little later Carpio’s father told me he wanted before night to send you a message, and that I should write if I wished, for he had been advised to indicate this to me by Mr Kelly.

‘I must thank Mr Kelly highly for not being entirely forgetful of me, and I undertake to signify this through the messenger who, I trust, is reliable, and I will write again through Stanislaus if it seems worthwhile.

‘I pray and beseech you by the living God who is the author of our friendship and who teaches us in turn to love one another mutually, that you do not forget me when you have the chance of restoring me by a letter or by messengers between us, and of reassuring me of the state of your and our affairs. For I shall certainly not forget you, and my services will testify to it, not only with God but also with all men.

‘If your return is to be postponed for some time, I shall visit next September, for I hardly live away from you for long. No, if one may say it with propriety, I tire of life. But for the present I shall deal with some matters which it is particularly unbecoming to write.

‘It is eighteen days since I last saw the apostolic nuncio, and since I have satisfied and more than satisfied obedience, I shall not go to him in case he persuade himself that he will so easily blind us with words.’

Pucci also reported that the nuncio ‘clearly enough hinted that he feared a meeting with you, particularly a calm and rational one, and seems to seek an occasion whereby he might argue with you “in the manner of the Spaniards.”’ Was this a threat of the methods of the Inquisition?

‘Mr Carpio does not return and Lord Rožmberk is said to be going to depart tomorrow and I do not know if I shall be able to get a letter back to Carpio on the question of those small sums of money; if you doubt or hesitate lest he put off the solution longer than is fitting, I ask to see to it that my interests may be looked out for in some other manner.’

He reported that he had not seen Ossa for twenty days.

‘But I said openly to the Jesuits and say whenever the occasion offers, that a signal injury has been done to you by them; they depend more upon earthly palaces than upon heavenly, they fear a fair comparison with you and quite clearly distrust their own cause. Therefore I am now less welcome with them.’

He concluded, ‘I greet the wife of Mr Dee, an outstanding woman, and worthy that I should honour her as a mother. Also the wife of Mr Kelly, a rare example of youthful sanctity, of chastity, and of all virtues. I salute you all, your other honourable members of the household, and you especially, John and Edward, beloved names to me, I hope and pray to be happy and blessed in the lord. You know how much I attribute and should attribute to your prayers, with them I pray and beseech that you would assist me with the lord God, that I may respond to my vocation and finish my course with a glad heart and sound body ...’

THIRTEEN : MAKING GOLD

1

Although Dee and Kelly had been expelled from the Empire, they were not without friends. Rudolf's relationship with the Vatican was ambiguous. At times it was politic for him to respond to pressure: but his commitment to Rome was far from full-hearted. Indeed, he was developing a resistance towards it as it attempted to infringe on his own imperial privileges. When Dr Kurz told Dee that a further request from Lord Rožmberk for the repeal of the banishment would be looked upon favourably by the senate, it was undoubtedly a message approved, maybe even initiated, by Rudolf. And now they were allowed to return to Rožmberk's estates.

And in Rožmberk they had a valuable new patron and ally. Whether they had sought out Rožmberk independently, or whether Rudolf had delegated Rožmberk to deal with Dee and Kelly, is unclear. It might have been Rudolf's way of keeping them at a distance, yet maintaining an opportunity to monitor their spiritual and alchemical experiments.

The Rožmberks had vast land holdings in southern Bohemia. They had splendid castles at Třeboň (also known by its German name of Wittingau), at Český Krumlov, and at Rožmberk. Třeboň, 140 kilometres south of Prague, was the main centre of the feudal power of the Rožmberks. They had built the Augustinian monastery there, and were now engaged in the construction of a series of lakes. The largest of these, Rožmberk, six kilometres to the north, was in construction from 1584 to 1590 – 720 hectares, with a 2,600 metre long dam. Rožmberk had alchemical laboratories at Český Krumlov and at Třeboň.

Dee and Kelly arrived at Třeboň on September 14, 1586, and occupied apartments in the castle for the next two years. Dee kept a diary record of their activities in the pages of an almanac, *Ephemerides Coelestium* calculated for 1581–1620 by Joh. Antonius Maginus, printed in Venice in 1582. From his leaving Gravesend in 1583 until settling at Třeboň, there are no diary records. Whether Dee had kept a diary for those three years and it is now lost, or whether he kept only the spiritual records, is not known.

2

Four days after arriving at Třeboň they had a visitor, Thomas Simkinson, bringing an offer of new patronage for Dee from the Tsar Ivan the Terrible. Was this an unsolicited offer? Or had Dee, or his friends on his behalf, been seeking employment after he was expelled by Rudolf?

The contents of Mr Garland's commission unto Thomas Simkinson for the bringing of Mr

John Dee to the Emperor of Russia's court.

Friend Thomas Simkinson I pray you go to Brunswick or Kassel and inquire if Mr John Dee be there or where he is, and when you find him, certify him how that I have sent you purposely to know where he does remain, and at your return I will come and speak with him myself. Also you may certify him that the Emperor of Russia having certain knowledge of his great learning and wisdom is marvellous desirous of him to come into his country. And has given me his letter with his hand and golden seal at it for to bring him into the country with me if it be possible, and for his living show him that he shall be sure of £2000 yearly, and also all provision for his table out of the Emperor's kitchen free: and if he think this too little, I will assure him that if he ask as much more, he shall have it, and for his charges into the country, I have sufficient of the Emperor's allowance to bring him and all his royally into the country. And because he may doubt of these proffers, he shall remain at the border until the Emperor be certified of him, and of his requests, which he would have. And I am sure he shall be conveyed through the land with five hundred horses, and he shall be accounted as one of the chiefest in the land next the Emperor. Also show him how that my Lord Protector at my coming away did take me in his arms, and desired me as he should be my friend to bring him with me, and he would give him of his own purse yearly 1000 roubles besides the Emperor's allowance. All these foresaid grants and demands do I, Thomas Simkinson acknowledge to be spoken by Edward Garland to me, and to be sent to declare the same unto Mr John Dee. And in witness that this is of a truth I have written the same with my own hand, and thereunto set my name, in Wittingau, called Třeboň, the 18 of September, anno 1586. By me, Thomas Simkinson of Hull.

3

The spiritual sessions continued. They had been instructed to have no actions for six months from Good Friday. The six months were now up, at the very moment that they settled in Třeboň. After three and a half months of uncertainty about where they could live, it seemed propitious that they were settled at the prescribed time. Within five days of their arrival at Třeboň, September 19, 1586, they resumed the transactions.

But the only answer to Dee's prayers was: 'Cold preparation. Cold speech. These call forth this cold response. On the return of William, however, your mediator and lamb will be prepared to reply, consult.'

A week later, on September 27, Pucci turned up in Třeboň.

Tuesday, October 14, in the morning after sunrise at about 7 a.m., they consulted again. Dee records, I had set up the table, the table of covenant, with the appurtenances, and had set the angelical stone in the frame of gold on the table, only E. K. and I being in the goodly little chapel next to my chamber appointed to our use.

‘What is to be decided about Pucci and the philosophic works as related to his proposal and what is to be concluded about the error in the experiment lately done and what new further particular is to be done by us and prepared for the calling of William, we to be in union with the good pleasure of God?’

‘Let him come that is to come.’

I went to the Lord Rožmberk, whom I found in his oratory of the church hearing mass, Dee records. And he came with me and sat in his place.

‘I see a great plain like a field,’ said Kelly, ‘as though it were a mile over, in the end of it there is a great high, rotten tree, all the grass is as though it were withered and burned, there comes a beam as of fire from heaven, and lights upon the tree, now there comes water out of the root of the tree, as though it were a sea, and spreads all over the plain. And the tree opens and there comes a man out of it, his hair hangs down to his girdle, his garment covers him down from his shoulders, and hangs behind him down upon the water. The earth has now drunk up all the water, and the man stands upon the dry ground. And the place is full of green grass about a cubit high.’

Dee expounded the vision to Lord Rožmberk in Latin.

‘Woe to you sons of men, for you are withered, and behold the field of the Lord brings you not forth,’ a voice declaimed. ‘You are defiled and being defiled you defile also the beauty of your seat. And behold, behold, behold, I say, you that are the king and princes of the earth tied and knit together upon one stem, you are all rotten and barren, behold, you bring forth no fruit; but even as the grass that withers, he is a disglory to the place, even so are you that is grass, of your situation and dwelling, for behold you have no leaves, much less fruit.’

The indictment went on. Its general tenor was familiar enough: the corruption of the world, and particularly the corruption of those in high places and in authority, and their doom.

‘And behold the higher boughs and mighty branches shall lose their virtue and be cast down, because they have placed themselves upon the outward rotten stock, to the dishonour of him that has called them ...’

But there was a specific concern too. Rudolf was unmarried and had no legitimate heir. Rožmberk was similarly without heir, though contemplating marrying again for the third time.

He had already discussed his anxieties about his state with Dee.

Rudolf's refusal to marry was a cause of worry to many in the administration. It was the same worry that exercised English statesmen over Elizabeth's refusal to marry. What would happen when the monarch died? What chaos would the disputes over the succession produce? Rudolf had six children by his mistress Anna Maria but he had no legitimate heir. The story was that a horoscope had predicted that a legitimate heir would rob him of the throne, so he never married. In the end he had to abdicate and surrender his throne to his brother: a legitimate heir indeed, the horoscope had spoken true. As for the 'rotten stock' of spirit's message, Rudolf's life style was generally perceived as dissolute and generated frequent complaints. His sexual adventures were the material of gossip, and his art collection noticeably featured erotic themes. But it was the succession issue that especially caused concern. This was a worry for Rožmberk too, who would inherit his vast estates? In the end Rožmberk died without issue, and the line finished on the death of his brother Peter, also childless, in 1611.

'This day I am descended and my promise is upon him that hears amongst you. For I will this day make a covenant with him so that my name and spirit shall not depart from this house. And what I have promised him I am and I will bring to pass; what is he or who is he that laughs me to scorn that if he repent not receives not his reward? And moreover, I will appear to him hereafter, and he shall be partaker of the celestial mystery if my name be exalted in him. And behold, he shall often fall, but he shall rise again, and shall persevere unto the end.'

Dee translated the message into Latin for Rožmberk, and then there was a pause for about an hour. They remained there, Dee records, 'and discoursed partly upon the premises and partly of England's misery to come.' Then the visions resumed.

'These four months let William, for as much as in him lies, abstain from Prague, for he shall deceive those that are deceivers.

'Two winds shall arise from the earth within these next years in this kingdom. In the first let him sit still. In the second let him arm himself and resist with victory.'

5

October 17, 1586.

After new disputes and quarrels with Francesco Pucci on account of money which he desired to have from us, Dee records, out of generosity and in the name of God and as though from the servants of God and not from Edward Kelly as Edward Kelly, we (Dee and E. K.) came to a settlement, in order to avoid scandals which he himself had spread and devised against us because of his 800 florins offered to God by him and at first refused, when we had

been ready to release him, and we presented to him 630 ducats in the presence of God that he might thereby accept what he considered to be his own.

We resolved to display the 800 florins before him and in the presence of witnesses: so that if he alleged they were owing to him, he could take them if he wished. But alternatively if he refused the 800 florins, or denied that any money was owed by us, then we wished that pronounced in the presence of witnesses, and to make it known by testimony and handwriting written out at convenient times and places.

From the castle we went therefore to the court-house, and calling together some leading citizens, the priest and some secretaries of the illustrious supreme prince, Lord Rožmberk, two large bags of money were displayed, and when two thousand ducats and in addition more than four hundred dollars were counted on the table, eight hundred florins, and the alternative propositions were proposed to him, which I have noted above, he was content to receive the money, but he wished to add that he had received it in the name of God and from us as servants of God.

We declared that we on no account took it upon ourselves to say that we were enjoined by God to offer it to him either for his acceptance or for his refusal, but only to avoid great and numerous scandals against ourselves, to commit there and then to his free judgement, and say what seemed better to him and was to him.

He accepted the money, therefore, and counted it and therefore it was written down in the handwriting of the secretary of the supreme prince, Paulus Wolf, present with various witnesses who subscribed their own name as can be clearly seen by the handwriting. Let us thank God. For we hope we will be for the better and will be more free, and God will convert him from his venomous and unquiet tongue and may be favourable to him.

The following day Pucci hurried off to Prague, where he stayed for three weeks.

6

At some point the Emperor Rudolf acquired an enigmatic manuscript, known now as the Voynich 'Roger Bacon' manuscript, and preserved in the Beinecke library at Yale University. There is a letter in the book from Johannes Marcus Marci, the rector of Prague University who died in 1667, recording that it was bought by Rudolf for 600 ducats.

It is speculated that Rudolf acquired the manuscript from Dee. It may have been one of the number of Bacon manuscripts Dee owned. It may have been a manuscript he acquired on his European travels. Or it may have been part of the manuscript that Kelly had found and was then acquired by Rudolf from Kelly. The manuscript that Kelly found consisted of two

individual books on different subjects; one of them the alchemical book of Dunstan, and the other a book of hieroglyphics.

Dee's son Arthur told Sir Thomas Browne that in Bohemia Dee possessed a book, found together with a powder, 'containing nothing but hieroglyphics, which book his father bestowed much time upon: but I could not hear that he could make it out.'

Despite considerable effort and computer assisted decoding applied to the Voynich manuscript, still no one has been able to make it out .

A copy of the 'Tractatus Maximi Domini Dunstani Episcopi Cantuarinsis, veri philosophi, de Lapide philosophorum' in the hand of Arthur Dee survives in the British Library, bound with his 'Arca arcanorum'. It is possible that this manuscript is a transcription of the book of St Dunstan's that Kelly discovered.

In October 1586, Dee was clearly in possession of 630 ducats, which he gave to Pucci to terminate the connection with that troublesome person. It may be that Dee, or Kelly, sold the manuscript to Rudolf at this point. Was it sold in order to raise the money? Or had Rudolf heard of the manuscript and made known a wish to add it to his collection of mysterious objects, a request that could not be denied? Was it a way of getting back into favour after banishment? Or of acknowledging the repeal of the order of banishment? Certainly it now seems that they were free to travel within the Empire again. On October 25, Kelly went to Prague for five days.

7

On December 17 Edward Garland and his brother Francis arrived at Třeboň with the formal offer from the Russian Emperor.

Right worshipful, it may please you to understand, that I was sent unto you from the most mighty Prince Feodor Ivanovich, Lord, Emperor and great duke of Russia, &c. As also from the most excellent prince Boris Feodorovich, Lord Protector of Russia: to give your worship to understand the great good will and hearty desire they bear unto you; for that of long time they have had great good report of your learning and wisdom, as also of your good counsel unto princes: whereupon his Majesty's most earnest desire and request is unto you; that you would take the pains to come unto his city of Moscow, to visit his Majesty's court: for that he is desirous of your company, and also of your good counsel in divers matters that his Majesty shall think needful. And for the great goodwill that his Majesty bears unto you, he will give you yearly toward your maintenance £2000 sterling; and the Lord Protector will give you a thousand roubles, as also your provision for your table you shall have free out of his Majesty's

kitchen. And further whatsoever you shall think needful or convenient for you, in any part or parts of his dominion, it shall be at your worship's commandment. And this is the sum and effect of my message and commandment given me by his Majesty and the Lord Protector.

In witness whereof I have written this with my own hand, the 17 of December 1586. By me Edward Garland. In Třeboň Castle otherwise called Wittingau in Bohemia; to which place this Mr Edward Garland came to Mr Dee with two Muscovites to serve him, &c. He had six more, which by Mr Dee's counsel were sent back.

Witness Mr Edward Kelly and Mr Francis Garland, brother to the foresaid Edward, and divers others.

The letter was later published by Richard Hakluyt, who remarks that this offer was made to Dee 'partly to use his counsel and direction about certain discoveries to the North-East; and partly for some other weighty occasions: but because their conquest of Siberia was not as then fully settled, and for divers other secret reasons, it was for the time with all thankfulness refused.'

8

Two days later Dee's diary records Kelly giving a demonstration of gold production in the presence of the Garlands. It is the first account of his engaging in an alchemical transmutation. Hitherto his expertise has all been in scrying. Although Dee had been conducting alchemical experiments at Mortlake for some years, there is no indication of Kelly's interest or expertise in alchemy until this episode.

December 19. 'For the gratification of Mr Edward Garland and Francis, his brother, which Edward was sent to me as messenger from the Emperor of Moscow that I should come to him, E. K. made a public demonstration of the philosopher's stone in the proportion of one small grain, no bigger than the least grain of sand, upon one ounce and a quarter of common mercury, and produced almost an ounce of most pure gold: and the gold was afterwards distributed from the crucible and one part was given to Edward Garland.'

If they could make a demonstration for the Garlands, the implication is that they had been engaged successfully in alchemical transmutations already. Dee recorded a visit 'to the glass house' on November 19. Presumably this was a visit to obtain equipment, unless the glass house denoted an alchemical still. They had been promised that the use of the powder that Kelly had found would be revealed to them at the proper time. Kelly, it seems, had now found its use.

And yet in January and March the following year Dee was still consulting spirit about the

use of the powder. In March he records that they were still unable to produce the philosopher's stone. Had they perhaps developed some partial expertise? Could they produce gold for show, but wastefully, using the powder uneconomically? According to Elias Ashmole the powder that Kelly had found, 'was so incredibly rich in virtue (being one upon 272330) that they lost much in making projection by way of trial, before they found out the true height of the medicine.'

Or was the demonstration a trick to impress the Garlands?

And who were the Garlands? Vincent Bridges and Teresa Burns have speculated that Francis Garland was William Shakespeare and Edward Garland was Edward Dyer. There seems no good reason to believe this. Dyer was well known to Dee, had visited Mortlake and was soon to visit Třeboň, so why would Dee call him Garland? Though Kelly, of course, had originally appeared under a false name, Talbot. And later Kelly is told by a spirit that Francis and Edward are not brothers, but spies sent by Burghley. Which may or not be true, too.

9

The invitation from the Tsar was both a considerable honour and a chance of financial security. Dee writes in his *Compendious Rehearsal* that he was 'by a messenger from this Russian or Muscovite Emperor, purposely sent, with a very rich present, unto me at Třeboň castle, and with provision for the whole journey (being about 1200 miles from the castle, where I lay) of my coming to his court at Moscow (with my wife, children and my whole family) there to enjoy at his Imperial hands £2000 sterling yearly stipend; and of his protector yearly a thousand roubles; with my diet also to be allowed me free out of the Emperor's own kitchen; and to be in dignity with authority amongst the highest sort of the nobility there, and of his privy-counsellors etc.

'Of this last great preferment, many Englishmen, yet living, be witnesses: the Landgrave of Hesse-Kassel's letter is ready to be shown, and other letters of men of credit can be sufficient testimony; besides the forerunner to seek me, and the ambassadors or messengers, their own writings thereof here lies.'

In the end he declined the offer, and chose to stay with Rožmberk at Třeboň. Was that because he had already legally committed himself to Rožmberk? Or because, alchemical transmutations under way, protection assured, his projects were at last coming to fruition? Was the transmutation in the presence of the Garlands a gesture by Kelly, or by Dee, or by both of them, to boast that they did not need the Emperor's roubles, they could make their own wealth? A foolhardy gesture, perhaps?

And then on December 29 Dee heard from Laski that Stephen Báthory, King of Poland, had died on December 11, aged 56. The death was sudden and not without suspicions of poisoning. Once again the issue of the election for the Polish throne was raised. Both Laski and Rožmberk had aspirations. But so did the Habsburgs – Rudolf's brother Maximilian was a candidate. And so did the Vasas, the Swedish royal family. It proved to be a bitterly fought and divisive contest.

10

In January 1587 Lord Rožmberk married for the fourth time. His wife was Polyxena, the daughter of the Chancellor, Vratislav von Pernstein and Maria Manriquez de Lara. Was this a decision made on the basis of spiritual advice? Or would he have married anyway? Dee was in Třeboň, but Kelly was in Prague at this time. It is not known if he was present at the festivities. The marriage had all the ceremony of a royal wedding. The Emperor Rudolf was one of the guests. A Prague informant for the banking house of the Fuggers reported, January 22, on the lavish expenditure.

A list of all the meat and poultry which was consumed on the occasion of the wedding festivities of his honour William of Rožmberk held in Prague from the 11th to the 14th day of January, 1587, during three meals: deer 36, venison 12 tons, boars 36, sucking pigs 9 tons, roes 40, hares 1290, turkeys 27, pheasants 272, partridges 1910, field hares 11,560, Westphalia cocks 50, oxen 75, sheep 764, calves 173, lambs 221, fattened pigs 32, young sows 160, Indian cocks 200, fattened capons 500, fattened hens 5560, young hens 900, fattened geese 1350, eggs 20,620, lard 17 hundredweight, cheese 2 tons, skate fish 960, char fish in pasties 70, large pike 300, small pike 420, carps 5800, a very large she-pike. Rhine wine 70 pails, Hungarian wine 100 pails, Moravian wine 40 pails, Austrian wine 17 barrels, Bohemian wine 47 barrels, sweet wine 10 kegs, pale ale 150 barrels, Rakonitz beer 8 barrels, barley beer 18 barrels. Spices, marzipan and sweetmeats, wheat for rolls and corn for rye bread – a goodly amount. In all estates, towns and villages, a goodly number of poor people were likewise fed and it is not yet known how much has been consumed.

11

Kelly returned from a three week visit to Prague on January 18. Dee records that he 'brought with him from the Lord Rožmberk to my wife a chain and jewel esteemed at three hundred ducats: two hundred the jewel stones, and one hundred the gold.'

While in Prague Kelly had received a spiritual vision and commandment. On his return to

Třeboň, he, Dee and Rožmberk held a spiritual action to consult on it, at 9 a.m. on January 21. The spiritual transactions had now become less frequent. Apart from two sessions in September and October, this is the only other one noted in the first six months in Třeboň.

‘Not by or upon presumption, oh lord,’ said Dee, ‘but with fear and love toward you we are ready to hear your will, as concerning the show and commandment new at Prague in this month’s beginning made to E. K. We believe and hope it is from you and that you will not tempt us or suffer us to be tempted in so weighty a case. And therefore being not perfectly informed in those two ounces of powder, E. K. knows not how to do, seeing at his return here he misses half an ounce of it, whether shall he with the residue make up that half ounce wanting, or not?’

There was a delay of a quarter of an hour, and then Kelly said, ‘Here appear letters if I could read them. Thus they are. A square, a triangle, an oblong, a circle, an oblong.’

‘Mihi, ita et a me.’ To me, and so and from me.

‘They seem white letters – of greenish yellow coloured figures, in every figure one of the four words, in all being twelve letters. Now they are gone.’ ‘I understand that the first part of my proposition is touched in answer to mihi,’ said Dee. ‘That is, to God the service is to be done: and ita et a me, so is the message or commandment from the same our God.’

‘Now here is other writing, thus,’ said Kelly, after another fifteen minute wait. ‘Claudite, clausae sunt.’

‘I do not understand this well,’ said Dee, ‘if it means no more to be taken out of the powder, or what else.’

‘Now other words appear over the former words, as thus: Cessate. Over claudite is cessate; the other words I cannot read yet. Over clausa sunt appears *divinum propositum sibi ad hue non constat*.’

And that was it.

12

On January 21 Kelly went back to Prague, and from there on to Poland. Thomas Kelly, Francis Garland and Ferdinando Harnik went with him. He wrote to Dee on January 25.

Sir, My hearty commendations unto you desiring your health as my own. My lord was exceeding glad of your letters, and said now I see he loves me, and truly as far as I perceive he loves us heartily. This Sunday in the name of the blessed Trinity I begin my journey, wherein I commend me to your prayers, desiring the Almighty to send his fortitude with me. I commend me unto Mrs Dee a thousand times, and unto your little babes: wishing myself rather amongst

you than elsewhere, I will by God's grace about twenty days hence return, in the mean season all comfort and joy be amongst you.

Your assured and immovable friend, E. Kelly.

On February 5 Dee had ridden with two horsemen of the city from Třeboň to Newhouse, two miles off, to meet Rožmberk. But Rožmberk travelled a different road and Dee missed him. Kelly's letter arrived while Dee was away so Jane sent Lodovic with it, with a covering note. The covering note is the only letter we have from Jane Dee to her husband. He preserved it amongst the spiritual transactions.

Sweetheart I commend me unto you hoping in God that you are in good health, as I and my children with all my household am here, I praise God for it; I have none other matter to write unto you at this time.

13

Kelly returned from Poland on February 19. The next month he and Dee visited Rožmberk's castle of Reichenstein in Silesia, where there were laboratories for alchemical and esoteric experiments. They were there for three days, March 14 to 17. While they were there, Rožmberk wrote to them with, amongst other matters, some questions to be asked at the next spiritual action. The issue of the election to the Polish throne loomed large. The letter was forwarded to them in Třeboň.

1. If the Emperor wished to question me about anything, either through some suspicion conceived of me or through imagining something himself, how should I respond?
2. If the Emperor should wish to discuss something for his brother concerning the succession of the kingdom, how should I respond?
3. If the Polish election is to succeed, what does the Lord dispose about my paternal property and what is to be done by me?
4. If I should confer on the Polish business with the Elector of Brandenburg or with some prince of the Empire in confidence or not, with which, when and for what reason?
5. If some soldier is to be led up and when?
6. If the Pope or Emperor should wish to bring something against the persons of your lordships, or to banish you again, or in any way to disturb you, what is to be done and what answer is to be made to them?
7. If something from the treasure entrusted to us is to be communicated to the Emperor, when, how much and how?
8. If the Emperor should wish to use my help for organising the election in Moravia and

Silesia, should I undertake this service?

For the rest may you humbly pray that the all highest may so guide me that I may be pleasing to him alone and serve him faithfully and steadfastly to the eternal glory of his name and the welfare of the Christian state.

If your lordships think that some points should be omitted or are such as could offend, for the love of God let them decide; let them omit or amend in accordance with their piety and prudence.

There is one proposition that I omitted. That I had decided in my mind as regards the treasure of the lord kindly granted to me, to establish some foundations here in the fatherland. God knows my mind in which nothing is concealed. Does my proposition please the most merciful lord or not?

And especially if, the divine grace thus disposing, I must change my abode for elsewhere, I should wish that my native land recognise, and all posterity, that I have loved her and entertained the best sentiments about her welfare and that of posterity.

Krumlov, 5th festival after Easter,

Yours from the soul, both brother and sincere friend.

14

Dee wrote out his own series of issues to be raised in the next spiritual action.

1. To the almighty father, son and holy spirit we most humbly offer ourselves, prepared for divine oracles, warnings, instructions, information and whatsoever things in this general action are to be undertaken, understood, and followed out, which his divine Majesty, in accordance with his glory and our highest consolation, has foreseen and decreed to be.

2. We humbly ask whether this plenary action may be, or is, fixed here or whether it will be necessary for us to prepare in advance at Krumlov with our necessary things, and with which of them indeed.

(Český Krumlov was fifty kilometres south-west of Třeboň.)

3. These twelve general questions of our Lord Rožmberk, and whatsoever other things are contained in particular in them, we humbly offer as much in his as in our name, expecting these and similar responses from the seat of divine Majesty, which are accustomed to proceed in the consultation of his servants, both hitherto and forever.

4. Because in the same questions no mention is made of the use of the powder which by divine permission he has as a concession, and because it has been said previously there should be information about the use of that powder in this action, we now humbly request that

information.

5. And because that extraordinary, tremendous but unknown favour of the Muscovite prince towards me is now to me and many others profound and manifest, I offer God as great thanks as I possibly can, and because I am uncertain to what end God wishes to direct that favour of his prince towards me, I humbly ask that information about that end by thee, almighty God, and about your will in this matter, and how I ought to reply to messengers of the same if any come.

6. Should we not prepare ourselves, as has been advised otherwise and at various times, to complete the philosopher's stone by the method of Dunstan here; which method because it is not certain to me has often made me seem hitherto in this work somewhat slow, idle or lazy, when on the contrary how prepared are my spirit and hands and feet and all my strength of soul and body, you know and you oh God be my witness.

7. That work, with iron cup, glass tube, lime, etc has not yet succeeded for us. Therefore towards obtaining the practical truth of that conclusion we must freely know what it is that has impeded us this far, or what is lacking in us for true understanding and completion of that work.

8. We commend to you the health and welfare of Thomas Kelly, to you, oh God, and pray that you may be propitious to him and to us, and restore him to us safe and sound, and deign to strengthen him for the praise, honour and glory of your name, according to his fruitful service and duty hereafter towards your divine Majesty, Amen.

Joanna, the wife of our Ed Kelly, supplicates through me your omnipotent divine Majesty, and I most humbly, in the name of the same Joanna, supplicate you, oh God, that you may consent to be merciful to her, clement and benign: and that you may look with fatherly love upon her repeated prayers to you to achieve fertility with her husband, and that you may grant her this joy as a reward of faithful service towards this husband so that with the offspring through the same and with the same she may be blessed and rejoice. Regard, we beseech you, this our petition, as you have accepted the same previously from many pious wives and husbands and have actually granted the petition, most merciful father, through your son, our lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

10. For my Jane, oh God, I most humbly thank you, that thus far you have with such piety and clemency freed her from the contagion of her radical infirmity, against which you have taught me to make medicine, and have assisted me to make it, and you have imparted such virtue to it when made that it presented to us such signs of the desired remedy as our ignorance the more hopes to be good and sure than it can disseminate by right reason: and so this

symptom of bloody flux, we do not know whether it is the sign of another disease or the functioning up to this point of the said medicine. Oh God, do not disdain to impart counsel to me, and concerning that frequent flux from the same Jane's ears, we would gladly hear of some remedy.

Concerning the state of England and of the Queen, if it is of use to us to know something, we shall gladly hear.

15

April 4, 1587, they began the third action at Třeboň. The previous two were in September and October. The January action had not been part of the series but in the nature of an emergency inquiry about the powder.

‘The giants of this world are a stumbling block to the poor people and to their subjects; for lo, behold, I say, vile and base things, for that they are misused, are become gods within their houses: so that gold and silver, precious stones and soft apparel which were wont to be brought out of their houses to garnish mine withal, are become their gods and the idols of their destruction.’

Then from behind a black velvet curtain in the stone a voice declared, ‘William, the Lord talks with you this day saying, Do you wish that I should buy a kingdom for you with gold or silver? Do you wish that the kings and princes of the earth should laugh the almighty God of the heaven and earth to scorn. Have I at any time preferred such as trust in me to the government of my people by giving them the excrements of the earth?’

The issue was clearly the Polish throne.

‘In the calling of Abraham, multiplication of seed was promised, which was to be a multitude in people, mighty and great upon the face of the earth. David was brought in, the least of his brethren, even to be king of Israel, not by the multitude of precious stones, gold or silver. A sling he had, a satchel with a few stones. Solomon was commanded to build me a temple, without any sum or stint. The apostles went from place to place, intending to teach; they carried neither gold nor silver but only a scrap or bag prepared for their common victuals and nourishment. And to such as stretched out their hands for my name, I have abundantly given; and it has been faithfully and for the love of me taken in hand.

‘Believe, therefore, with Abraham and with his children. Bring your sling and bag before the people of the Lord against Goliath. Endeavour yourself with Solomon to build a commonwealth in which I will be exalted.

‘Do not neglect the time of this your visitation, nor despise this kingdom in which you

shall reign, for in so doing I dwell with you for ever, and with your posterity which shall in me be mighty. When you are entered into it, whatsoever treasure there is in my house or amongst you, take it, use it. Make yourself a sword of it with two edges, that with the one you may cut off the bastard's head and with the other build up the monuments and the houses of cleanliness, godliness and understanding, that the earth may flourish again and that I may make one flock from the sun rising to his going down.

'In the meantime the powder which you have shall be multiplied, be extended and multiplied with them that are here present, that it may be apt for your uses, and the strengthening of your faith. The one half of it you shall keep as the perpetual remembrance of me, even you and your posterity.'

Rožmberk had an ounce and a half of the powder, Dee noted. Presumably this was given him from the powder Kelly had found. Or did Rožmberk already have a supply of his own?

Instruction was given on how to relate to Rudolf.

'To him that is your head, do your true obedience, although his heart is hardened against you and thirsts after your destruction. For behold, your enemy that seeks to devour your soul does not cease to lay wait for you, that you may become odious to the common people. But the time shall shortly come when you shall have justice against him. See therefore that you smite; see, I say again, that you smite him, for justice is the hand of the highest, punishing such as offend either against him or his innocent.

'That which is Caesar's give to Caesar; and that which is mine, to the house of my honour.'

He replies to one point in his letter whether Caesar (Rudolf), out of powder, should be given some portion, Dee noted.

After Rožmberk's questions had been answered, there were instructions for Dee and Kelly.

Dee was told, 'Your wife is even at the door of sickness: but behold, I am even he, the lord of health.'

As for Kelly, 'As to you, barrenness dwells with you, because you did neglect me and take a wife to yourself contrary to my commandment. For neither young nor old, rich nor poor, are respected with me. But what I will have done is just and whosoever does it not is privily, if he be not openly, punished for his offence. Therefore you shall have the womb which you have barren and fruitless to you because you have transgressed that which I commanded you.'

But there is a mystery here. In April 1582 Talbot, as Kelly then called himself, complained that, contrary to his own wishes, Michael in a spiritual message had instructed him

to take a wife. Yet now Kelly is rebuked for having taken a wife contrary to divine commandment. The contradiction suggests either there was a misinterpretation, or that one of the messages was not from a divine source. Had Kelly chosen the wrong wife? Or was the original command not a divine one, but Talbot's own wish disguised as a divine command? But why then had he railed against it?

Joan Kelly was mother of two children by an earlier marriage, so she clearly was not barren. Is the meaning of the message that Kelly is sterile? Was this a spirit message or a claim of Kelly's? Was it true? And was it preparatory information, or disinformation, for the event that now developed?

16

Meanwhile a new issue was addressed. Kelly wanted to be free of dealing with the spirits.

E. K. told me, Dee records, that he had all Lent prayed once a day at the least that he might no more have dealing to scry.

'The fourteenth day hence shall this action end, on which day you shall once again assemble yourselves here together. And now behold I say to you,' the voice addressed Kelly, 'to you who have had your eyes opened and your ears made perfect, who have been exalted by the sight of the heavens, why do you call upon me desiring to be made free?

'Is it a burden to you to be comforted from above? Oh foolish man. By how much the heavens excel the earth, by so much does the gift that is given to you from above excel all earthly treasure. Notwithstanding, because that manna is loathsome to you, behold what is said to you this day.

'You are made free, neither shall you any times hereafter be constrained to see the judgement of the highest or to hear the voices of the heavens. The power which is given you of seeing shall be diminished in you, and shall dwell upon the first begotten son of him that sits by you, as I have said before.'

Arthur Dee, Prague, 1585, Dee noted.

'In the meantime he shall be exercised here before me, until the time come that his eyes shall be opened and his ears receive passage towards the highest. And these fourteen days shall be a time to you of choosing or refusing. For I will not cast you away, neither out of my house unless it be from your own ignorance and wilful despising of my great benefit.

'If, therefore, you are weary of it, the fourteenth day hence, bring here and lay before me the powder which you have, for you have offended me, as a false steward, in taking out of that which is not your own. I will no longer dally with you, but will give to you according to your

works.'

'Oh God be merciful to us,' said Dee, 'and deal not with us according to the wickedness, forwardness and blindness of our hearts.'

FOURTEEN : SWAPPING WIVES

1

Dee's eldest son Arthur was born on July 13, 1579. He was seven years and nine months old when Dee tried to train him to replace Kelly as his seer. Dee records the process. It was not a success.

Dee had expected that Kelly would instruct Arthur in the procedures, particularly so because Kelly said that he was very glad now that he should have a witness of the things shown and declared by spiritual creatures, and that he would be more willing to do what should be so enjoined to him to do, than if only he himself did see.

But he waited in vain for Kelly to call Arthur and in the end Kelly refused, and said it was for Dee to exercise the child.

Wednesday morning, April 15, 1587, Dee records, I brought the child to the holy table, being in order of the furniture thereto belonging, and set before him the stone in the frame, my first sanctified stone.

After prayers, in the stone there appeared to Arthur, as he judged, several little square figures, with pricks, and several other figures and lines, which I caused him with his own hand to imitate upon a paper with pen and ink. The lines were white, and some of the pricks also, but other of the pricks were black as of ink.

'Two old men with black beards and with golden crowns upon their heads do appear,' Arthur said. 'One is now gone. This holds his hands before him like a maid.

'Now in the place of those square marks I see two lions, the one very exactly and gaping. They appear about the upper brim of the stone, and the lions' feet wax greater and greater.

'I see another man from the breast upward. I can see no hair on his head.

'I see a great company of feet and their garments' skirts somewhat above their ankles.

'I see another man without a doublet, in his shirt, and with a white cloak about him, hanging his hands down by his sides.'

Nothing else esteemed or judged to be shown in the stone by the child, we ceased that exercise, and committed all to God's mercies, Dee records.

2

On Thursday and Friday, Dee continued, I determined each of them two days that the child shall thrice in the day be put to the exercise, and each time repeat the prayer prescribed thrice.

In the forenoon I brought the child to the exercise and he said as follows.

‘I see two men with crowns of gold upon their heads. Their apparel is black and white. I cannot see their feet. Their faces are white, their eyes are black like spots of ink.

‘Now there appear two others, without crowns, of the which one stands whole before, and of the other I see nothing but the head, which stands behind the first. I do not see any with crowns now. The apparel of him that I see is white. I see no hands of him. I see nothing now. The square and pricks appear again as yesterday,’

‘I doubted it was something of the glass itself, as there were in it certain white spots,’ Dee remarks. ‘We were at the practice an hour.’

The ensuing attempts were no more successful: lines, squares, letters, the occasional castle, the occasional figure of a man.

3

They were still trying on Friday afternoon, Freya’s day, Venus’ day. At length, writes Dee, by wonderful good fortune or by divine destiny, E. K. joined us and I noted down what followed.

He sat down by us, Arthur still standing before me at the table, which was covered after the best manner, but only the stone being set on it. He asked if anything appeared.

I answered, ‘No, albeit I have called often, and have prayed earnestly that some of our former accounted friends might shown themselves to the boy, like Madini, Il and chiefly Uriel, because as he was first who appeared to the joining of E. K. and me together, so he might also be the director in the translating of E. K.’s office to Arthur.’

Then he said, ‘I marvel if you had no apparition here, for I somewhat thinking of Arthur and his proceeding in the feat of scrying, came here into the gallery, and I heard you pray. And opening the window I looked out and I saw a great number going in and out of this chapel at the little hole in the glass window. I saw Madini, Il and many others that had dealt with us heretofore, but they showed themselves in very filthy order. And Uriel appeared and justified all to be of God, and good. And therefore I wonder if here you have no show. Perhaps there is something, but Arthur does not see it.’

‘True it is,’ said Dee, ‘and how should I help him in this, seeing I cannot yet see or scry?’

‘I will come and see if there is anything,’ said Kelly.

And so E. K. looked towards the stone and he by and by said, ‘Here appears something,’ and pointed to Arthur where, and asked him if he saw anything, and he said, ‘No.’

Then E. K. said, ‘I see like a white marble square table or book lying on a wooden desk.’

‘I pray you sir, take the pains to look and discern what is shown here,’ Dee asked him.

‘I see written upon that book, “Blessed who through sin restore a falling house whole to men.” Now a leaf of that book is turned open and there is written on it, but I cannot read it yet. Now I see it. “I am he who gave and is to give you the law from which perpetual rest and felicity will come to mortals.” Now another leaf is turned over and appears written, “Be therefore such as befits me and mine and take thought in my presence as I walk.” Now the leaf turns over of itself. “Lest the hungry and thirsty one through your negligence and obstinacy either come to grief” – now the leaf turns – “for the time being, let him lack nourishment.” Now the desk and book or table is gone.’

Bye and bye after, Dee records, while E. K. looked into the stone, he said, ‘I see a hand appear, a very great one, white. The hand is gone but there remains writing. “You shall shortly hear and see everything.” It is as if it were upon the side of a white globe afar off. The globe turns so swiftly that I cannot read it clearly. “How you will be in the future it is not permissible to you to know. For the greater things coming to mortals from above are at the doors. They daily hasten as they were in the first or the second measure of the age. He who has ears, attend. He who has a mind let him understand. Why, one committing adultery on my account will be blessed eternally and given a heavenly reward.’

Sight and hearing promised, Dee noted in the margin. At last, after all these years, he would be able to hear and see everything, the spiritual creatures, the visions, the instructions. But at a price. What was meant by ‘one committing adultery on my account will be blessed eternally and given a heavenly reward’? What did the ‘filthy order’ of Madini, Il and the others mean? He was soon to find out.

4

Saturday, April 18.

Arthur was set to the stone but nothing appeared, Dee records. E. K. had brought the powder with him as he was bidden to do. Then I desired him to apply himself to see as he was wont. And so he did.

‘Here appear all in the stone that appeared yesterday to me in the air in that most disorderly and filthy manner. They are in the like apparel as yesterday.’

‘Oh God,’ said Dee, ‘confirm us in your truth for your own honour and glory and suffer us not to be overcome with any temptation, but deliver us from all evil now and ever.’

‘Madini and Il and the rest appeared. And so they are here. But now all the rest are gone and only Madini remains,’ said Kelly. ‘Madini opens all her apparel, and herself naked, and

shows her shame also. Fie on the devil, avoid hence with this filthiness,' said Kelly.

'In the name of God why do you find fault with me?' asked Madini.

'Because your yesterday's doings and words are provocations to sin and unmeet for any godly creature to use.'

'What is sin?' asked Madini.

'To break the commandment of God,' said Dee.

'Set that down so,' said Madini. 'If the selfsame God give you a new commandment taking away the former form of sin which he limited by the law, what remains then?'

'If by the selfsame God that gave the law to Moses,' said Dee, 'and gave his new covenant by Christ, who sealed it by his blood, and had his very many witnesses, and his apostles instructed by his holy spirit, who admonished us of all cleanness in words and works, yea and in thoughts, if by the same God those former laws and doctrines are abrogated and that sufficient proof and testimony may be had that it is the same God, then must the same God be obeyed.'

She kneels and holds up her hands, said Kelly.

'The laws of God and of his son Christ,' said Madini, 'established by the testimony of his disciples and congregation, and by the force and power of his holy spirit, are not in any particular vocation abrogated but rather confirmed. For often it falls out that God being offended at the wickedness of any man, or of some private man, sends down the spirit of death, infecting and tempting another man's mind, so that he becomes the void of reason and rises up against him whom God is offended with, and strikes him so that he dies. This, before man, is accounted sin; before God it shall be imputed to him for righteousness. Even so whatsoever the spirit of God teaches us from him, though it appears sin before man, is righteousness before him. Therefore assure yourselves, that whatsoever is seen and heard amongst you is from above and is a sign and testimony even this day before you; for I that touched your son might also have taken away his breath.'

Arthur was smitten in a swoon, Dee records, and E. K. saw one in a long white garment make as though he would smite him. He was very sick for the time.

'The apostle Paul abounded in carnal lust,' said Madini. 'He was also offensive to his brethren so that he despaired and was ready to have left his vocation, until the lord said to him, My mercy and grace suffices you.'

'You are fools, and of little understanding. This day God says to you, Behold, you have become free. Do that which most pleases you. For behold, your own reason rises up against my wisdom. You are not content to be heirs, but you would be lords, yea Gods, yea the judges of

the heavens.'

'I see a white pillar,' said Kelly. 'And upon the pillar I see four heads. She ties the pillar round about with a list. The four heads are like on two heads, and on two wolves' heads. Now there comes a thing like a white crown of crystal and stands upon all four heads. The heads seem to be enclosed by the necks within the pillar. Now she takes the pillar and goes up with it. Now she brings a half moon down, and on it is written, "Nothing is unjust that is just to God." Now she goes round about upon a thing like a carpet. She goes now beyond where there is an orchard. She cuts branches off two trees, and she seems to insert them or graft them into another. Now she goes into a black place behind the wood and brings a thing with her in a chain, an ugly thing like a devil.'

'See this,' said Madini, 'wherewithal you thought to overthrow and most infect, you are utterly overthrown and shall never return again.'

'Now he leaps and the ground opens and he sinks in, and there seems a stink of brimstone to come to my nose from the pit. Now the grafts are all grown in the tree, as if they were all of one tree. Now she comes out of that orchard. Now she goes round about the orchard and leaves a darkness like a cloud round about the orchard.'

'Visible to God but invisible to man,' said Madini.

'Now she comes again upon her carpet,' said Kelly.

'Behold, if you do not resist God, but shut out Satan, through unity amongst you, thus it is said to you, Assemble yourselves together every seventh day that your eyes may be opened and that you may understand by him that shall teach you what the secrets of the holy books delivered you are, that you may become full of understanding and in knowledge above common men.

'To William I will be merciful for ever, according to my promise. But I will buy him no kingdom, after the manner of men, with money. But what I have determined to him shall happen to him: and he shall become mighty in me.

'And this powder which you have brought here is appointed for a time by God and cannot be used until then without offence. Happy is he that hears my words this day and happy is he that understands them. But if you deny the wisdom of the highest and account us, his messengers, creatures of darkness, this day you are made free.

'You shall shortly have to do again with the cruelty of the Emperor and the accursed bishop. Whereunto, if you go forward with God, you shall be taught to answer. If you leave off, as soon as you hear of it, be going into Germany, lest you perish before then.'

I was glad, writes Dee, that an offer was made of being every seventh day to be taught the secrets of the books already delivered to us, thinking that it was easy for us to perform that unity which was required to be amongst us four, understanding all after the Christian and godly sense.

But E. K., who had yesterday seen and heard another meaning required of this unity, utterly abhorred to have any dealing with them further, and intended to accept at their hands the liberty of leaving off dealing with them any more, which his understanding, as it was strange and unpleasant to me, so I earnestly requested to be resolved therein in manner as follows. At the same time and in the same place this ensued.

Upon Mr Kelly's great doubt bred unto me of Madini's words yesterday, spoken to him, that we two had our two wives in such sort as we might use them in common, it was agreed by us to move the question, whether the sense were of carnal use, contrary to the law of the commandment, or of spiritual love and charitable care and unity of minds for advancing the service of God.

'The one is expressly against the commandment of God,' said Dee, 'neither can I, by any means consent to like that doctrine.'

He prayed for spiritual assistance.

'It appears written upon a white crucifix as follows,' said Kelly.

'Amen I say to you, because if I should say to a man, Go and kill your brother and he did not do it, he is the child of sin and death. For all things are possible and permitted to those above. Nor are they more shameful to them than the faces of any mortals you please. For thus it will be done, when a bastard, which is more absurd, copulates with his son and the east with the west or the south with the north is united.'

Hereupon we were in great amazement and grief of mind that so hard and, as it yet seemed to me, so unpure a doctrine was propounded and enjoined to us of them whom I always, from the beginning hitherto, judged and esteemed undoubtedly to be good angels, and had to E. K. offered my soul as a pawn to discharge E. K.'s crediting of them as the good and faithful ministers of almighty God. But now my heart was sore afflicted upon many causes, and E. K. had, as he thought, now a just and sufficient cause to forsake dealing with them any more.

After our going out of the chapel and at our being at dinner, when we four, whose heads were so united, in a pillar shown, as is before set down, I found means to make some little declaration of our great grief, mine chiefly, now occasioned, either to try us, or really to be

executed, in the common and indifferent use of matrimonial acts amongst any couple of us four. Which thing was strange to the women. And they hoped of some more comfortable issue of the cause. And so we left off.

6

After dinner, as E. K. was alone, records Dee, there appeared to him little creatures of a cubit high: and they came to the still where he had the spirit of wine distilling over out of a retort.

And one of them, whose name they expressed Ben, said that it was in vain so to hope for the best spirit of wine: and showed him how to distil it and separate it better and, moreover, how to get oil of the spirit of wine as it burned in the lamps; and he began to ask E. K. what countryman he was.

And when he had answered, 'An Englishman,' he asked then how he came here.

He answered, 'By sea.'

Then said he, 'And who helped you to pass the marvellous great dangers of the sea?'

And so took occasion to speak of the benefits which God had hitherto done for us, very many. And this Ben said then among very many other things, as Mr Kelly told me on Saturday night after supper, holding on his talk almost till two o'clock after midnight, that he it was that delivered him or gave unto his hands the powder. And also he said either then or the next day at the furthest, that unless he would be conformable to the will of God in this last action declared, that he would take the virtue and force of the powder from it, that it should be unprofitable, and that he should become a beggar.

That the powder would lose its power of transmutation was a terrible threat to them both.

And of me also he said that I did evil to require proof or testimony now, that this last doctrine was from God almighty, and said that I should be led prisoner to Rome, etc.

He told of England and said that about July or November her Majesty should be destroyed from heaven, and that about the same time the King of Spain should die. And that this present pope should be deprived of life at his mass before the end of two years. And that another should be pope, who should be fifteenth of this name. And that he would begin to reform things but that shortly he should of the cardinals be stoned to death. And that after that there should be no pope for some years.

Of England he said that after the death of our dear Queen, one of the house of Austria made mighty by the King of Spain's death should invade and conquer the land, etc. He said one, now abroad, should enter at Milford Haven and by the help of the Britons subdue the said

conqueror. And that one Morgan a Briton should be made king of the Britons, and next to him one Rowland, etc.

Rowland was the name of both Dee's father, and of Dee's second son, born in 1583.

He said also that this Francis Garland was a spy upon us from the Lord Treasurer of England. And that Edward Garland is not his brother. And that so the matter is agreed between them, etc.

That my Lord Rožmberk should be in danger of poisoning for these certain months to come.

That my tables of Enoch were in some places falsely written.

Of Antichrist he spoke, and of his appearing.

He confirmed the words of the great famine and bloodshed that should come shortly. He said that on every side of us people should be slain, but that by divine protection we should escape. He said that shortly this Francis Garland should go into England, and that we should be sent for. But that it were best to refuse their calling us home. He said that there were four others who were also made privy of God's mysteries as we were, with whom we should meet at Rome. He said that Mary and one more in England should see the wonderful days to come. Madini appeared to him there also. The same Ben once went away mounting up in a flame of fire, and afterwards, upon occasion of asking him something, he came down so again. And of the manner how to draw the oil of the spirit of wine being burnt, he brought thither the instruments of two silver dishes, whelmed one upon another with a hole passing through the middle of them both, and with sponge between them: in which the oil would remain, etc.

After all these and many other things told me by the same Mr E. K., we departed each to his bed, where I found my wife awake, attending to hear some new matter of me from Mr Kelly's reports of the apparitions, continued with him above four hours, being else alone.

I then told her, and said, Jane, I see that there is no other remedy but as has been said of our cross-matching, so it must needs be done.'

Thereupon she fell a weeping and trembling for a quarter of an hour. And I pacified her as well as I could. And so, in the fear of God, and in believing of his admonishment, did persuade her that she showed herself prettily resolved to be content for God's sake and his secret purposes, to obey the admonishment.

Dee added a note two days later, April 20: Because I have found so much halting and untruth in E. K.'s reports made to me of the spiritual creatures where I have not been present at an action, and because his memory may fail him, and because he was subject to ill tempers, I believe so much hereof as shall by better trial be found true, or conformable to truth.

Raphael advised Dee ‘to make a covenant with the highest, and to esteem his wings more than your own lives.’

April 21, Dee drafted it:

We four, whose heads appeared under one crystalline crown, in one pillar united and enclosed, do most humbly and heartily thank thee, oh almighty God, our creator, redeemer and sanctifier, for all thy mercies and benefits hitherto received in our persons and in them that appertain to us. And at this present do faithfully and sincerely confess and acknowledge that thy profound wisdom in this most new and strange doctrine, among Christians, propounded, commended and enjoined unto us four only, is above our human reason and Christian profession to like of. For that in outward show of words it seems to us expressly to be contrary to the purity and chastity which of us and all Christians, thy followers, is exactly required.

Notwithstanding we will herein captivate and tread underfoot all our human timorous doubting of any inconvenience which shall, or may, fall upon us, or follow us in this world, or in the world to come, in respect or by reason of our embracing this doctrine, listened unto of us, as delivered from our true and living God, the creator of heaven and earth, who only has the true original power and authority of releasing and discharging sins: and whose pardoning and not imputing of sin unto us, through our lively faith in the most worthy merit and precious blood of the lamb immaculate, shed for us, is and shall be our justification and salvation.

We therefore according to blessed Raphael’s counsel last given, most humbly and sincerely require thy divine majesty to accept this our covenant with thee, for that thy merciful promises made unto us may be to us performed; and thy divine purposes in and by us may be furthered and advanced and fulfilled. That, as we acknowledge thy divine wisdom and grace offered unto us in this thy last mystical admonishment: and does most earnestly will us to accept the same as lawful and just with thee; which admonishment stands upon two parts: that is to wit upon our true Christian spiritual charity between us four, and also upon the matrimonial licence and liberty, indifferently among us four to be used: so we the same four, which hereunto will subscribe, covenant with thy divine majesty upon the two principal respects before rehearsed, truly and unfeignedly to accept and perform henceforward amongst us four in word, thought and deed, Christian charity and perfect friendship and all that belongs thereto.

And as for the matrimonial-like licence and liberty, we accept and allow of it, and promise unto thee, oh our God, to fulfil the same in such sort, as the godly are permitted to fulfil, and

have been by divers testimonies commended for, and by divine doctrine willed to fulfil, in matrimonial conversations, whensoever thy motions and allurements, matrimonial like, shall draw and persuade any couple of us. Beseeching thee, as thou art the only true, almighty and everlasting God, creator of heaven and earth, thou wilt, in thy infinite mercies, not impute it unto us for sin, blindness, rashness or presumption, being not accepted, done or performed upon carnal lust, or wanton concupiscence, but by the way of Abraham-like faith and obedience, unto thee, our God, our leader, teacher, protector and justifier, now and for ever. And hereunto we call the holy heavens to be witnesses for thy honour and glory, oh almighty God, and our discharge, now and for ever. Amen.

8

The following day Kelly drafted his own document, repudiating the spiritual transactions. It is an extraordinary rejection of the previous five years' practice. Was this an insurance policy for what might result from the agreement to share sexual partners? Or was he eager to abandon the spiritual sessions now that he had transmuted gold, eager to devote all his time and energies to material alchemy and abandon the infinite deferral of the angelic messages?

I, Edward Kelly, by good and provident, according to the laws and ordinances of God, determination and consideration in these former actions, that is to say, appearings, shows made, and voices uttered, by the within named in this book, and the rest whatsoever spirits, have from the beginning thereof, which at large by the records appears, not only doubted and disliked their insinuations and doctrine uttered, but also divers and sundry times, as coveting to eschew and avoid the danger and inconvenience that might either by them, themselves, of the drift of their doctrine ensue, or to my endamagement divers ways happen, sought to depart from the exercises thereof: and withal boldly, as the servant of the son of God, inveighed against them: urging them to depart, or render better reason of their unknown and incredible words and speeches delivered.

And withal often and sundry times friendly exhorted the right worshipful Mr John Dee, the chief follower thereof, as also in the records appears, to regard his soul's health, the good proceeding of his worldly credit, which through Europe is great, the better maintenance to come of his wife and children, to beware of them, and withal to give them over: wherein although I friendly and brotherly laboured, my labour seemed to be lost and counsel of him despised, and withal was urged with replies to the contrary made by him, and promises, in that case, of the loss of his soul's health, if they were not of God: whereunto upon as it were some farther taste of them, or opinion grounded upon the frailty of zeal, he ceased not also to pawn

unto me his soul, etc., which his persuasions were the chief and only cause of my this so long proceeding with them: and now also at this instant, and before a few days having manifest occasion to think they were the servants of Satan, and the children of darkness, because they manifestly urged and commanded in the name of God a doctrine damnable, and contrary to the laws of God, his commandments, and gospel by our saviour Christ as a touchstone to us left and delivered, did openly unto them dislike their proceeding, and brotherly admonished the said worshipful and my good friend Mr John Dee to beware of them.

And now having just occasion to determine what they were, to consider all these things before mentioned by me and wisely to leave them, and the rather because of themselves, they, as that by their own word appears, upon our not following that doctrine delivered, gave unto us a quietus est, or passport of freedom: but the books being brought forth, after some discourse therein, after a day or two had, and their words perused spoken heretofore, did as it were, because of the possible verity thereof, for to God all things are possible, gave us cause of further deliberation: so that thereby I did partly of myself and partly by the true meaning of the said Mr Dee in the receiving of them as from God; and after a sort by the zeal I saw him bear unto the true worship and glory of God to be, as that was by them promised, by us promoted, descend from myself, and condescend unto his opinion and determination, giving over all reason or whatsoever for the love of God.

But the women disliked utterly this last doctrine, and consulting amongst themselves gave us this answer, the former actions did nothing offend them but much comforted them; and therefore this last, not agreeing with the rest, which they think to be according to the good will and wholesome law of God, makes them to fear, because it is expressly contrary to the commandment of God; and thereupon desiring God not to be offended with their ignorance, required another action for better information herein; in the mean vowing, fasting and praying, Mrs Dee has covenanted with God to abstain from the eating of fish and flesh until his divine majesty satisfy their minds according to his laws established, and throughout all Christendom received.

To this their request of having an action, I absolutely answer, that my simplicity before the highest is such as I trust will excuse me; and because the sum of this doctrine, given in his name, does require obedience which I have, as is before written, offered, I think myself discharged; and therefore have no further cause to hazard myself any more in any action.

Wherefore I answer that if it be lawful for them to call this doctrine in question, it is more lawful for me to doubt of greater peril; considering that to come where we are absolutely answered were folly, and might redound unto my great inconvenience.

Therefore beseeching God to have mercy upon me, and to satisfy their petitions, doubts and vows, I finally answer, that I will from this day forward meddle no more herein.

22 April, 1587. By me, Edward Kelly.

9

Dee's Diary records for May 1; I saw, my teacher demonstrating in advance, the angel Michael. Praise to God and my teacher E. K.

Had the power of seeing angels at last been given to him?

10

Dee made another draft of the covenant between the four of them. There were a number of detailed verbal changes, nothing substantial, and an additional two long sentences.

‘And for a further consummation of this new covenant on our behalf, by thy will and permission, made with thee, the God of heaven and earth, we the same four first notified, and particularly and vulgarly named John Dee, Edward Kelly, Jane Dee and Joan Kelly, have faithfully, obediently, willingly and wittingly subscribed our names with our own hands, — day of May, anno 1587. In Třeboň castle.

‘And finally, as thou has warned us, oh God, that this doctrine and doings should unto no mortal man else be disclosed, but among us only the above named four to be kept most secret: and has said, that whosoever of us should by any means disclose the same and he also or she to whom the same should be disclosed should presently and immediately be struck dead by thy divine power: so we all and every of us four do request thee most earnestly and covenant with thee as our God, that so all this doctrine and doing may be kept most hid and secret; and also that the sudden and immediate bodily death may light and fall on the discloser, and on him or her to whom the same doctrine or doing any manner of way shall be disclosed or known. Amen, Amen, Amen. John Dee.

Note and remember, Dee writes, that on Sunday the third of May, 1587, by the new account, I John Dee, Edward Kelly, and our two wives covenanted with God and subscribed the same for indissoluble and inviolable unities, charity and friendship keeping between us four, and all things between us to be common, as God by sundry means willed us to do. Be it done to the honour, praise and glory of God in faith and obedience.

May 3, the private diary records, the agreement was signed.

Třeboň, in the fine chapel, Wednesday, May 6, 1587.

The foresaid covenant being framed by me, John Dee, as near as I could according to the intent and faith of us required, to be notified and declared by the works of unity both spiritual and corporal.

Now it was by the women as by ourselves thought necessary to understand the will of God and his good pleasure, whether this covenant and form of words performed is and will be acceptable and according to the well liking of his divine majesty: and that hereupon, the act of corporal knowledge being performed on both our parts, it will please his divine majesty to seal and warrant unto us most certainly and speedily all his divine, merciful and bountiful promises and blessings; and also promises us wisdom, knowledge, ability and power to execute his justice, and declare and demonstrate his infallible verity amongst men, to his honour and glory.

Hereupon E. K. and I went to the chapel to the south table.

I read over the covenant, verbatim, before the divine majesty and his holy angels.

There was a pause for a quarter of an hour.

‘Here appears Madini,’ said Kelly. ‘As a thing like a head with three eyes comes upon her head, and one of the eyes seem to come one into another.’

‘You have made fast,’ said Madini.

‘We have made fast,’ said Dee.

‘It is calculated all things for you in common. Be of God, not man. Possess the promised things which are destined for you, they are true. I am eternal.’

‘She is gone,’ said Kelly. ‘I thought an infinite number of spiritual creatures stood afar off behind her like as in a half moon.’

Wednesday morning, May 20.

Prayers to the lord creator of heaven and earth etc., writes Dee. Then as concerning the covenant which was made, subscribed and delivered in, but the next day required again of Mr E. K. and in his wife’s name to put out his name, etc. But when he had it, he cut it into equal parts, keeping that half wherein his subscription and his wife’s were and delivered to me the other half, but after a few days desired to have the sight and reading of both together; and then he kept the other part from me also. But afterwards Madini did with her finger draw on the two papers and make them whole again etc., and then she gave the print of my characters and said a red circle should always appear in the stone to all men’s sight.

Yet again they consulted the spirits.

‘There is here a great globe of fire hanging in the top of the stone,’ said Kelly, ‘and in the globe a man standing with a purple robe like Christ, I cannot well perceive his face.’

‘Oh you of little faith and understanding, oh, I say,’ he said, ‘you of little faith and understanding, how long will you be your own masters, nay your own servants, how long do you condemn the profound and unspeakable floods of my wisdom and foreknowledge in you? How long, I say, will you run after your own imaginations and condemn the present counsels which I give you, hindering the power that is ready to fall upon you, oh you of little faith and understanding.’

‘Behold I have prepared a banquet for you, and have brought you even to the doors, but because you do not smell the feast you disdain to enter, happy is he that enters in through me. For I am the very gate to all felicity and joy and without me is nothing. Are you more discreet than I am wise? Or more honest than I am holy?’

‘And you, even you that has torn in pieces even this morning again this covenant which you have made with me, behold the time shall come that you shall be torn in pieces yourself, and I shall turn even my face away from you for a time.’

‘And even as you have obstinately and ignorantly blasphemed the company of my holy messengers, even so shall the people of the earth obstinately and ignorantly throw you out from town to town. And even as you have done to me, even so shall men do to you. But because your mind was inwardly never to forsake me, even so shall you never be forsaken of me, but I will return again to you.’

‘And now behold, you have made a bargain, and behold you think to take up a new dwelling place, and shall not do so. But who so receives you into his house shall as truly as I am, both he and his family, sink down into the very lake of hell. But before you enter in, I will by dreams and visions warn him, therefore do not run abroad. Take heed of the tempter. You made a covenant with me which you cannot put out by breaking the papers: for my register is eternal. And those that bear witness before me are the compass of my wings.’

‘And lo behold Carpio has for his former intent of separating you, cut off the day of his father and is become fatherless. Behold even shortly shall his mother perish also.’

‘And if hereafter he attempt any farther, I will throw the vengeance of justice upon him that he shall be a laughing stock to the people amongst which he was born. Woe be unto them that rise up against me.’

‘After a while I come again.’

Dee read it over to Kelly.

‘I thought we should have nothing else.’ said Kelly. ‘But he is here again.’

‘He that pawns his soul for me does not lose it, and he that dies for me, dies to eternal life.’

Dee noted, This was said because I had pawned my soul upon my avouching the spiritual creatures which have dealt with us to be of God and good; which my bargain E. K. had by word and writing, disdainfully charged, and of late threatened me withal.

‘Behold, you shall both as lambs be brought before men in your latter days, and shall be overthrown and slain, and your bodies be tossed to and fro. But I will revive you again, and will be full of power. And you shall be comforted with the joys of your brethren, for I have many that secretly serve me, and when you have shown your obedience, the second day after, come here again before me. For I will lead you into the way of knowledge and understanding. And judgement and wisdom shall be upon you, and shall be restored to you, and you shall grow every day wise and mighty in me.’

And Mr E. K. hereupon said to his wife, That his boots were now put off, and changed his purpose of going away with Carpio now. God confirm his mind in all good purposes according to the well pleasing of the highest. Amen.

13

Thursday, May 21, Dee’s private diary records, ‘Pactu~ factu~.’ The agreement done, performed.

14

The cross-matching was to remain secret, with the threat of immediate death to whoever might disclose it. There is no account of the event itself. Did they all go to bed together, and each make love to their original partner and their new partner? Or did each new couple go away separately and make love in private? Did they then return to their spouses, and make love again? Were there reassertions of love, or recriminations? Was this a long night of multiple couplings: or an anxious, nervous brief fulfilment of an unwelcome command? Was Kelly resistant to a command he suspected, or had he manipulated the situation to make love to a woman he had long desired, or with whom he had often battled? Was he motivated by desire, or was it a power play? Or was it Dee who was attracted to Kelly’s young wife? And did they do it again? Or was this a once only occasion they all preferred not to repeat?

This is of course the great set scene; that we end up drawing the curtain across. It is like an episode in the show stone. A reflection of amazing events, but are these angelic visitations, or our own obsessions? This is the story everyone tells about Dee and Kelly, how they held their

wives in common. Yet we know nothing about it. Where do you start? Was this Kelly's desire for the high born Jane Dee, a former retainer of Lady Clinton at Elizabeth's court? Or Kelly's perception of the English Magus's fascination with the young flesh of Jane Cooper? Dee was now sixty, Jane Dee and Kelly were both thirty-two, Joan Kelly twenty-four. Or are these unacceptable preoccupations? Did Jane Dee feel a connection with Kelly, a mixed revulsion and attraction, was that what all the explosions and expostulations had attempted to deny? Or was it a simple detestation? Did Joan have desires, or revulsions in coupling with Dee? Indeed did Jane or Joan have any role in it all? Was it perhaps an expression of some homosexual desire between Dee and Kelly? Or was it all a mistake, a failure to check if it really was Madini instructing them, or if Madini really was an angelic spirit? Were they suddenly set upon by devilish forces? Had Rudolf's magicians, or the Jesuits, manipulated the forces to encompass their destruction? Or was it an alchemical instruction interpreted personally, an example of those 'elective affinities' Goethe was to write about two centuries later 'when four substances, united until that moment two by two, are brought into contact, desert their previous union, and unite afresh. In this letting go and seizing hold, this fleeing one thing and seeking another, one is really inclined to discern some higher prescription; one ascribes to such substances a sort of volition and power to choose and the technical term "elective affinities" seems perfectly justified.'

This is where the documents cease. And since the documents are absent, let us leave an absence. There is no necessity to fabricate the detail. The detail is familiar and simple enough. There is no need to describe the coupling. Our own readerly imaginations can surely manage that. It can remain protean. A shifting image for whatever occasion arises, the show stone's reflection of our own preoccupations.

15

The following day the spiritual records resume.

Friday afternoon, about four o'clock, Dee records, as I and E. K. walked out at the new stairs into the new orchard along the little river to view the small fish, and returning to the forestairs again, E. K. saw two as high as my son Arthur fighting by the river side with swords, and the one said to the other, 'You have beguiled me.'

Then I at length said to them, 'Can I take up the matter between you?'

One said, 'Yes, that you can.'

'In what is it?' I said.

Then he said, 'I sent a thing to your wife by my man, and this fellow has taken it from

him.'

They fought sore and at length he that had it was wounded in the thigh and seemed to bleed. Afterwards, he that was wounded brought a yellow square thing out of his bosom. Then I guessed it to be my stone that was taken away.

The other said to him, 'Let it be carried.'

Suddenly he seemed to have been out of sight and to be come again.

He threatened the other that had wounded him and said he would be even with him.

The other said, 'Have you laid it under the right pillow of the bed where his wife lay last night?'

At length they both went, one after the other, into a little willow tree body on the right hand next to the new stairs into the garden.

The tree seemed to cleave, or open, and they to go in.

Hereupon we went away.

And I coming to my chamber found my wife lying upon her bed, where I lay last night, and there I lifted up the right pillow, upon which she lay resting herself, being not well at ease. And under her shoulders there I found my precious stone, that was taken away by Madini. At which E. K. greatly wondered, doubting the verity of the show. But I and my wife rejoiced, thanking God.

16

Saturday, May 23, 1587, about 9.30 a.m.

Prayers to God were poured forth, Dee records. And then we requested that the act of obedience performed, according to our faith conceived of our vocation, from the almighty and eternal God of heaven and earth, might be accepted. And that henceforward we might be instructed in the understanding and practice of wisdom, both such as already we have received some introductions mystical, and also of all other what the almighty God shall deem meet for us to know, and execute for his honour and glory, etc.

E. K. took pen and ink and wrote his request here adjoined; and he read it to me and he requested me to read it to the divine majesty, and so I did, and hereupon we awaited the divine answer both to my prayer and to this petition.

'Almighty, eternal, true and living God, send your light and your truth that it may lead and bring us to the mountain, the holier Sion, from this vale of misery and to your heavenly Jerusalem. Amen.'

A man in bright harness appeared sitting upon a white horse, with a fiery spear and a long

sword and a shield adorned with cherubim, and then went into a great field.

There was a brief exchange about the cross-matching. The horseman in bright harness asked, 'Kelly, was your brother's wife obedient and humble to you?'

'She was.'

'Dee, was you brother's wife obedient to you?'

'She was obedient.'

And then Madini appeared and asked, 'Dee, do you lie or say truth, in saying she was obedient?'

'I counted her obedient for that she did whereof she thought her obedience to consist; for that she did not come after as I thought she would, she might seem in some part disobedient; but if it offended not God, it offended not me, and I beseech God it did not offend him.'

Did the spirits need to ask these questions, or was it Kelly checking up on what happened? The passage was later deleted, but whether by Dee or Kelly is unclear.

Then a woman all in green appeared. Then a woman attired as if in beaten gold, with a crystal cross on her forehead. Her neck and breasts were bare. She had a girdle of beaten gold slackly buckled, with a pendant of gold down to the ground.

'I am the daughter of fortitude, and ravished every hour from my youth,' she said. 'For behold, I am understanding, and science dwells in me; and the heavens oppress me, they covet and desire me with infinite appetite. Few or none that are earthly have embraced me, for I am shadowed with the circle of the stone and covered with the morning clouds. My feet are swifter than the winds and my hands are sweeter than the morning dew. My garments are from the beginning and my dwelling place is in myself. The lion knows not where I walk, neither do the beasts of the field understand me. I am deflowered and yet a virgin. I sanctify and am not sanctified. Happy is he that embraces me, for in the night season I am sweet and in the day full of pleasure. My company is a harmony of many cymbals and my lips sweeter than health itself. I am a harlot for such as ravish me, and a virgin with such as know me not. For lo, I am loved of many and I am a lover to many and as many as come unto me as they should do have entertainment.'

'Purge your streets, oh ye sons of men, and wash your houses clean; make yourselves holy and put on righteousness. Cast out your old strumpets and burn their clothes; abstain from the company of other women that are defiled, that are sluttish, and not so handsome and beautiful as I, and then will I come and dwell amongst you: and behold, I will bring forth children unto you and they shall be the sons of comfort. I will open my garments and stand naked before you, that your love may be more inflamed towards me.'

‘As yet I walk in the cloud; as yet I am carried with the winds and cannot descend unto you for the multitude of your abominations and the filthy loathsomeness of your dwelling places.

‘Behold these four, who is he that shall say, They have sinned? or unto whom shall they make account? Not unto you, oh you sons of men, nor unto your children, for unto the lord belongs the judgement of his servants.

‘Now therefore let the earth give forth her fruit unto you and let the mountains forsake their barrenness where your footsteps shall remain. Happy is he that salutes you, and cursed is he that holds up his hands against you. And power shall be given to you from henceforth to resist your enemies: and the lord shall always hear you in the time of your troubles. And I am sent to you to play the harlot with you and am to enrich you with the spoils of other men. Prepare for me, for I come shortly. Provide your chambers for me, that they may be sweet and cleanly, for I will make a dwelling-place amongst you, and I will be common to the father and the son, yea and with all them that truly favour me; for my youth is in her flowers and my strength is not to be extinguished with man. Strong am I above and below, therefore provide for me. For behold I now salute you and let peace be amongst you, for I am the daughter of comfort. Disclose not my secrets to women, nor let them understand how sweet I am, for all things belong not to everyone. I come to you again.’

She disappeared into the green field. After half an hour she returned with a book in her hand, covered, as it were, with moss, three inches at the head and four inches long and a finger thick. It has no clasps, it was plain.

After a pause she told them, ‘The fourth hour after dinner repair here again. And whatsoever you shall read out of this book, receive it kneeling upon your knees; and see that you suffer no female creature to enter within this place. Neither shall the things that be opened to you be revealed to your wives or to any creature as yet; for I will be with you a while and you shall perceive that I am sweet and full of comfort and that the lord is at hand and that he will shortly visit the earth and all his whole provinces.’

17

Four hours after dinner they returned.

And now their last known spiritual message was delivered.

A voice said to Kelly, ‘Kneel toward the East.’

He kneeled at the table of covenant with his face toward the East, and Dee at his table opposite to him.

‘The book remains hanging in the air,’ said Kelly.

‘Kelly,’ said a voice, ‘I know it is troublesome for you to kneel. Sit.’

So Kelly rose from kneeling and sat.

No explanation is offered as to why it was difficult for Kelly to kneel. Did he perhaps have some injury? The papal nuncio Sega had referred in 1586 to Kelly as ‘the cripple.’

‘Now she is here that last advertised us,’ said Kelly. ‘She takes the book and divides it into two parts: and it seems to be two books. The half cover adjoins to one, and the other half cover belonging to the other, the sides with the covers are towards me.’

‘You are the chosen of this last days,’ they were told, ‘and such as shall be full of the blessings of God, and his spirit shall rest with you abundantly. Mark therefore what I have to say to you.

‘A hundred days are limited to you during which time you shall every seventh present yourselves in this place and you shall laud and praise God. And behold I will be present amongst you.

‘And before these days pass, when power is given me to do so, I will enter out of this stone unto you and you shall eat up these two books, both the one and the other; and wisdom shall be divided between you, sufficient to each man.

‘Then shall your eyes be opened to see and understand all such things as have been written unto you, and taught you from above. But beware you take heed, that you dwell within yourselves, and keep the secrets of God, until the time comes that you shall be bid to speak. For then shall the spirit of God be mighty upon you: so that it shall be said of you, “Lo, were not these sorcerers and such as were accounted vagabonds.” Others shall say, “Behold, let us take heed, and let us humble ourselves before them. For the Lord of Hosts is with them.”

‘And you shall have power in the heavens and in the lower bodies. And it shall be taught you at all times inwardly even what belongs to the hearts of men. Then shall you, Kelly, have a new coat put upon you, and it shall be all of one colour. Then shall you, Dee, also have power to open that book which God has committed to you.

‘For even as the sun looks into all things from above, so shall you into all the creatures that live upon the earth. Yea, the one of you shall enter into the fourth or fifth heaven, for unto him that is worldly knowledge be given; and unto him that has been patient, shall great things descend.’

‘Oh lord, I thank you that you have accepted my patience,’ Dee wrote in the margin.

‘In the mean season, the seventh day hence you shall bring in such things as the Lord has given you.’

The book of Dunstan and the powder, Dee noted.

‘And in this place they shall be disposed according to the knowledge that is given me: and herein you have pleased the lord, for you have dealt straight and according to brotherly meaning.’

And then the last days were predicted.

‘Now comes the time that the whore shall be called before the highest and the tenth month hence shall the Turk and the Muscovite make a perpetual league together, and in the thirteenth month shall Poland be assaulted, with the Tartarians ... and in the 23rd month Rome shall be destroyed, so that one stone shall not be left standing upon another ... and even this kingdom shall endure for a while, that is to say, this wicked triumph. And behold in the north shall rise that monster and shall pass forth with many miracles, but you seeing all these things shall be in quietness until such times as it shall be said unto them, Revenge. Happy is he that is not partaker of the love of such as shall be vexed these latter days.’

And that was it.

Nothing further of the spiritual actions is known. Did they meet in seven days time on May 30? There is no known record of any meeting. Dee’s private diary continues the story, but makes no further mention of spiritual actions. Years ahead, back in England, Dee was to experiment with other scryers.

But this is the last known message through the medium of Kelly.

18

Fifty-three years later Arthur Dee gave one of the crystals that his father and Kelly had used to the apothecary Nicholas Culpeper ‘as a reward for having cured a liver complaint of his with the greatest rapidity, A. D. 1640.’ According to Culpeper this was the crystal that had been given to Dee by an angel in 1582, which Dee gave to Kelly, who gave it to Lord Rožmberk but then retrieved it.

Culpeper records, ‘I have used this crystal in many ways and have thus cured illnesses, but with its use a very great weakness always sets in and lethargy of the body. And further a certain demoniacal apparition which exercised itself to lewdness and other depravity with women and girls, used to tempt me, but by making the sign of the cross and speaking these words, “Pah Adonai, by thy strength am I fortified. Phorrh! Phorrh! Haricot! Gambalon!” the apparition used to fly soon or instantly, with noise and evil smell. For these obscenities I have given up the use of the crystal, and to witness these things I have written them on this sheet on the 7th day of March in the year 1651.’

William Lilly bought the crystal from Culpeper's widow and tried his own experiments on it with Elias Ashmole. They conjured up 'a female devil lewd and monstrous,' he records, February 10, 1658.

The crystal is now in the Wellcome collection in the Science Museum, South Kensington.

19

June 14, 1587, Kelly's brother Thomas married a Bohemian wife, Ludmilla, or, as Dee records her name, Lydia. She was the niece of a powerful rising politician, Jindrich of Pisnice. But domestic concord was not to be the lot of the other members of the household.

June 17, Dee recorded in his diary in Greek characters, 'After this full moon Jane hath them not. Note.' He used Greek characters to note down entries he wanted to keep private.

Jane Dee was now pregnant. So, soon, was Ludmilla. But Joan Kelly, rebuked by her husband for her barrenness, remained barren. Joan's suspicions and resentments, her unavoidable speculations as to who was the father of Jane's child, could only increase. What she felt, and what unease Jane felt, and what if anything Dee and Kelly felt, is nowhere spelled out. But the tensions between the households simmered, with occasional attempts at reconciliation.

20

Dee now wrote to Sir Francis Walsingham, 'my especial and high good friend.' Amongst the formal generalities one thing is clear: he wanted to return to England.

Most honourable Sir,

So deeply is the reverence and love from me due to your honour planted in my heart that I so very willingly and gladly either speak honourably of, or write humbly unto your honour: as unto one in whose hands I am assured the favour of the highest duty and will further justice and equity in opportunity. Whether I feign honour or would flatter, I take the God of heaven and earth to witness. Therefore having convenient means, by this honest gentleman, Francis Garland, humbly to salute your honour, I most earnestly request your honour, that you would renew or continue your honour's good opinion of my fidelity to her most excellent Majesty and the realm, in as high good terms, as when your honour have thought best of me. As yet, or on this side the seas, to render account of any fruit or commodity to ourselves or to our country's behoof reaped by this our peregrination, it is needless. But I trust of our coming home more will be friendly glad than were of our going abroad friendly sorry. And though I have not heard from my brother Mr Young since May was a twelvemonth, yet I hope that my pitiful case of

my books, and other great injuries endured, have had (by your honour's favour) some good redress. And before Christmas next I expect to hear from my good friend and brother Mr Justice Young some particulars thereof specified. Of the occurrences in these countries, this bearer can declare some unto your honour: but of news to come, there is none in these quarters in greater expectation nor of more importance than the Polish king's election. By that time this bearer shall be come into England, the mysteries thereof will be known manifestly. God (of his goodness inestimable) has hitherto delivered me and my friend here from the Popish and Jesuitical conspired tyranny against us: and he we trust will bring us safe home into our native country again: as he has led us out, and protected us hitherto, with sufficient proof, of his merciful and mighty hand with us.

The same and the only one God, mercifully and carefully guide and protect, now and ever your honour, and our singular good lady, your honour's most virtuous bedfellow, and our good friend and favourer, the young Lady Sidney, your honour's most dear and virtuous daughter: ours I say, meaning herein, my Jane; whose devotion to the same, my prayer, is both fervent and faithful.

Written in Třeboň Castle, belonging to the viceroy of Bohemia, our good friend and patron, this 17 of June, by the old calendar, anno 1587.

Your honour's most bounden as I make my reckoning, John Dee.

21

The situation in Třeboň was not helped by the reappearance of Francesco Pucci, who arrived on July 9 with Christian Francken, a theological controversialist who, Pucci said, 'had now recanted his wicked book against Christ, whereof,' writes Dee, 'I was glad.'

Pucci left after four days.

Five years later, back in England, Dee showed the Archbishop of Canterbury 'two books of blasphemy against Christ and the Holy Ghost, desiring him to cause them to be confuted: one was Christian Francken, printed anno 1585 in Poland.'

July 19 Dee records 'a certain kind of reconciliation between our wives. Next day saw some relenting of E. K. also by my Lord's entreaty.'

August 13 Dee records that 'I conferred amicably with Mr Edward Kelly.'

November 8 he records 'E. K. dreadful expostulation, accusation etc. at the third hour after noon.'

22

The election of the king of Poland was not resolved as quickly as Dee had assured Walsingham it would be. Rudolf's brother, the Archduke Maximilian, was backed with the financial support of the Spanish ambassador, San Clemente, and the blessing of the Pope. But the black faction – they wore mourning clothes in memory of King Stephen – favoured the Swedish contestant, Sigismund.

The electoral session broke up in disorder. Maximilian assembled an army, and the black faction crowned Sigismund on December 27 1587. War broke out and Maximilian was taken prisoner in Silesia. He was not released until the Habsburgs agreed to surrender their claims. Neither Laski nor Rožmberk had gained a throne. Whatever Dee and Kelly might have hoped for in terms of their own future roles had not eventuated.

23

January 18, 1588, Thomas Kelly's wife Ludmilla had a miscarriage 'of a girl of five or six months; she was merry and well till the night before.' Dee assisted medically.

And then on February 28, 1588, nine months after the cross-matching, Jane Dee gave birth to a boy, who was baptized the following day, and named Theodorus Třeboňianus Dee. Theodorus Třeboňianus, the gift of God at Třeboň.

Was this Dee's child or Kelly's? Did anyone ever know for sure? The question is never raised in the diary let alone answered. Was Kelly able to have children anyway? Did spirit's statement a month before the cross-matching that 'barrenness dwells with you' mean that Kelly was sterile? And was it true?

April 3 Pucci turned up again and added to the tensions. 'Mr Pucci disquieted Mr E. K. about requesting an action to be had, one of our six month's actions, being now the term beginning the fourth day of this month. The end of our talk was a strange speech of Mr Kelly to Fr Pucci, "After 15 weeks write to me and I will answer you."'

No record of any actions is known to survive.

April 10, Dee records, 'I wrote to Mr Edward Kelly and to Mrs Kelly two charitable letters, requiring at their hands mutual charity.'

April 12 'my wife churched, and we received the communion.'

Theodorus Třeboňianus was being treated as Dee's child. And since the four of them had vowed to tell nobody of the episode, why would anyone suspect otherwise? It is only Dee's spiritual records that break the vow of secrecy.

Pucci continued to cause trouble.

April 22, 1588, Dee records 'Terrible and false accusation or suspicion that I had censured

Pucci against Mr K. and the Prince.’ Dee had to write to Rožmberk to clarify matters.

‘May 1, Mr Carpio rode to my Lord to the holy well at the glass house, four miles from Třeboň, with my letters of purgation for Pucci’s attempt or intents in his letters to my lord and Mr Kelly, unknown to me.’

Carpio returned three days later and ‘brought me word of my Lord’s displeasure conveyed and confirmed by cozening Pucci his letter had.’

May 7 the issue seems to have been resolved. ‘After my great trouble, God is compassionate to me. In addition, on the same day the prince’s letters came to Mr E. K., declaring his very great displeasure ... Certainly those letters were unwelcome to Mr E. K.’

May 22, 1588, ‘Mrs Kelly received the sacrament, and to me and my wife gave her hand in charity; and we wished well to her.’

It was the anniversary of the cross-matching.

On June 13 Francis Garland arrived in Třeboň with Edmond Cooper, Mrs Kelly’s brother. Had Cooper come to help resolve the tensions, or to escort his sister back to England?

July 7 Thomas Southwell came to visit them at Třeboň. There were further attempts at reconciliation.

‘July 17, Mr Thomas Southwell of his own courteous nature did labour with Mr Edmond Cooper and indirectly with Mrs Kelly for to further charity and friendship among us.’

But things could never be again as they were.

On October 17 ‘Mistress Kelly and the rest rode toward Prachatice to the marriage.’ Whose marriage it was and who the rest were is not specified.

It is the last mention of Joan Kelly in any of Dee’s records. A week later Kelly went to Prague, and the following month her brother, Edmond Cooper, set off for England. Whether Joan returned with him, or remained in Třeboň, is unknown.

24

Meanwhile the alchemical activities had continued. Ashmole summarises some of them, their dates converted to the old style current in Britain.

‘During their abode at Třeboň, they tried many chemical experiments (to see whether they could make that jewel they possessed, the particular account of their operations I need not here relate) yet I cannot hear that ever they accomplished anything; only I find the 27 of April [1588], noted by Dr Dee with several expressions of joy and gladness, as “This is the day which the lord has made.” Again, “The great mercy of God,” and lastly, “Let all that lives praise the Lord.” And to testify what they mean, he writes upon the 30 day following, “Mr

Edward Kelly did open the great secret to me. God be thanked.”

‘Things were not carried here so privately but Queen Elizabeth had notice given of their actions, whereupon she used several means by letters and messages to invite them back into England, where it was believed she had so far prevailed that Mr Simkinson and Mr Francis Garland’s brother Robert coming from England to Třeboň supposed they had been ready to come over to England upon the Queen’s letters formerly sent them.’

Passages of some letters written by Kelly during this period survive, and were printed in a collection of his writings published in Hamburg in 1676. They deal with alchemy, but it is not known to whom they were addressed.

June 20, 1587: ‘As you are willing to take my advice, I will partially reveal to you the arcanum, so that the field may not disappoint the hopes of the husbandman. Open your ears. Our gold and silver, sun and moon, active and passive principles, are not those which you can hold in your hand, but a certain silver and golden hermaphroditic water; if you extract it from any perfect or imperfect metallic body, you have the water of life, the asafoetida, and green lion, in which are all colours, ending in two – white and red ...’

August 9, 1587: ‘The sages agree that the stone is nothing but animated quicksilver. But if your quicksilver has no life, it is not what they mean. Again, if it has the form of mercury, before it receives life, it is unprofitable. For this woman – to be more frank than discreet – is a viscous water, extracted from the bowels of Jupiter, i.e. from white lead; it is moist and wets the finger.’

25

Dee’s eldest son, Arthur, was an observer of a number of the alchemical transmutations. Arthur, who later became physician in chief to the Tsar Mikhail, himself wrote an alchemical tract, *Fasciculus chemicus*, which Ashmole translated into English. In 1649 he wrote to Mr Aldrich in Norwich about his father: ‘I do aver he had the universal medicine of the philosophers whereof I have been eye-witness for seven years together, and very often seen the true transmutation of metals into as pure gold as any is in the world, one dram of the medicine being of the power to transmute a thousand thousand of other metals into most pure gold, many times done in the presence of Rudolf the Emperor and other noble men of those parts, as also before my old Lord Willoughby and Sir Edward Dyer, our countrymen, who were sent to Prague by Queen Elizabeth to examine the verity thereof, who seeing it really performed returned fully satisfied.’

Arthur Dee often repeated his claim. Sir Thomas Browne wrote to Ashmole in 1659 that

Arthur 'was a persevering student in Hermetical philosophy and had no small encouragement, having seen projection made, and with the highest asseverations he confirmed unto his death that he had ocularly, undeceivably and frequently beheld it in Bohemia.'

Fifteen years later, in 1674, Browne wrote again to Ashmole: 'Dr Arthur Dee was a young man when he saw this projection made in Bohemia, but he was so influenced therewith that he fell early upon that study and read not much all his life but books of that subject.

'I have heard the doctor say that he lived in Bohemia with his father both at Prague and other parts of Bohemia. That Prince or Count Rožmberk was their great patron who delighted much in alchemy. I have often heard him affirm and sometimes with oaths that he had seen the projection made and transmutation of pewter dishes and flagons into silver which the goldsmiths at Prague bought of them. And that Count Rožmberk played at quoits with silver quoits made by projection as before: that this transmutation was made by a small powder they had which was found in some old place and a book lying by it containing nothing but hieroglyphics which book his father bestowed much time upon, but I could not hear that he could make it out.'

26

To what degree Kelly and Dee were working separately or together now is unclear. Kelly made various journeys in 1587 – to Budweis (České Budějovice to give it its Czech name), 24 kilometres west of Třeboň, to Linz fair in August, and to Prague for two weeks in October.

There was certainly some cooperation. September 28, Dee records, 'I delivered to Mr Ed Kelly (earnestly requiring it, as his part) the half of all the anima which was made. It is to wit twenty ounces: he weighed it himself in my chamber. He brought his weights purposely for it. My Lord had spoken to me before for some, but Mr Kelly had not spoken.' Anima was one of the alchemical synonyms for mercury. 'At the end of October John Carpio did begin to make furnaces over the gate, and he used my round bricks, and for the iron pot was contented now to use the lesser bricks, sixty to make a furnace.'

Carpio had his own problems: December 10 he returned to Prague 'to marry the maiden he was so troubled for. The Emperor's Majesty, by my Lord Rožmberk's means, had so ordered the matter.' He was back in Třeboň, after his marriage, the following February, and in April brought his wife from Prague to Třeboň.

December 12 there was one of those accidents that alchemical experimenters often suffered. 'After noon somewhat, Mr Ed Kelly's lamp overthrew, the spirit of wine being spent too near, and the glass being not stayed with bricks about it, as it was meant to be; and the same

glass so falling on one side, the spirit of wine spilled out, and burnt all that was on the table where it stood, linen and written books – as the book of Zacharias with the athanor that I translated out of the French for him by spiritual commandment; Rowlaschy's third book of waters philosophical; the book called *Angeliæ Opus*, all in pictures of the work from the beginning to the end; the copy of the man of Budweis's conclusions for the transmutation of metals; and forty leaves in quarto entitled *Extractiones Dunstani*, which he himself extracted and noted out of Dunstan's book, and the very book of Dunstan was but cast on the bed hard by from the table.'

Fenton identifies Rowlaschy as Philippus Rouillaschus. Dee's library catalogue lists a copy of the first French edition of Denis Zacaire's *Opusculæ Tres-Excellent de la vraye Philosophie naturelle des Metaux* (Antwerp, 1567), and a manuscript also in French. Possibly it was this latter manuscript that was destroyed. In his diary for July 31, 1590, Dee records 'I gave Mr Richard Candish the copy of Zacharias' twelve letters, written in French with my own hand; and he promised me, before my wife, never to disclose to any that he hath it; and that if he die before me he will restore it again to me: but if I die before him, that he shall deliver it to one of my sons, most apt among them to have it.'

It was not all work and tension. January 13, 1588, Dee records, 'At dinner time Mr Ed Kelly sent his brother, Mr Th. K. to me with these words, "My brother says that you study too much, and therefore, seeing it is too late to go today to Krumlov, he wishes you to come to pass the time with him at play."

'I went after dinner and played, he and I against Mr F. Garland and Mr Robert Garland till supper time in his dining room; and after supper he came and the others, and we played there two or three hours, and departed friendly. This was thus after the great and wonderful unkindness used toward me, in beating my man.'

The following day Kelly rode to Český Krumlov, 'being sent for by my Lord.'

The alchemical work went on through 1588.

February 8, 'Mr E. K. at nine of the clock after noon sent for me to his laboratory over the gate to see how he distilled sericon, according as in time past and of late he heard of me out of Ripley.'

'March 24, Mr K. put the glass in dung.' 'May 10, Mr E. K. did open the great secret to me, God be thanked!'

Thomas Southwell, who had attempted to mediate between Mrs Kelly and her brother and the Dees, also had alchemical interests which he discussed with Dee and Kelly. August 13 'he told us of the philosopher (his schoolmaster to write) whose name was Mr Swift, who gave him

a lump of the philosopher's stone so big as his fist: a Jesuit named Mr Stale had it of him.'

August 24 'I saw the divine water by the demonstration of that great master and incomparable friend of mine, Mr Ed Kelly.'

December 7 'great friendship promised for money and two ounces of the thing.'

December 18 'Mr Ed Kelly gave me the water, earth and all.'

27

Early in 1588 Giordano Bruno turned up in Prague and stayed there for some months, though once again there is no indication that he ever met Dee or Kelly. But one visitor who did seek them out was Edward Dyer.

Francis Garland had arrived in Třeboň from England in November 1587 with a letter for Dee from Edward Dyer.

December 18, 'Thomas Simkinson and Mr Francis Garland's brother Robert came to Třeboň from England, thinking we were ready to come into England upon the Queen's letters sent for us.'

Was Elizabeth summoning them back so that their alchemical experiments could proceed in England, and supplement the English coffers? Had Garland reported the alchemical transmutation he had observed on his previous visit? Was Dyer now sent on a mission when Dee and Kelly failed to return with Simkinson and Robert Garland?

June 11, 1588 Dyer sent word in a letter from Francis Garland that he was 'three miles from Třeboň, but it was not so.' Dyer, however, was on the way, and June 16 Francis Garland, now back in Bohemia, 'went to find and bring Mr Dyer.'

Edward Dyer, knighted in 1596 but at this time still plain Mr Dyer, was Arthur Dee's godfather. He had studied alchemy under Dee with Philip Sidney. He had retained his interest in the subject, and in the mid 1570s he had assayed for Walsingham a sample of the ore Frobisher had brought back from North America, believing it was gold. Dyer had demonstrated that it was not. Now in Europe, his biographer Ralph Sargent remarks, 'he could not resist the temptation to continue his journey and investigate the alchemical labours of Kelly in person.' Was it simple temptation, or was he under official instructions from Elizabeth, or Burghley, or Walsingham? He arrived in Prague, paid an official visit to the Emperor Rudolf, and then came to Třeboň on July 20. Two days later, Dee records, 'Mr Edward Dyer did injure me unkindly,' but the following day friendship was restored; 'good reconciliation with Mr Dyer with words, made with E. K. mediating.'

Whether this was a quarrel involving alchemical secrets, or Dee's failure to return to

England when summoned by Queen Elizabeth, or whether it involved the dispute then simmering between Joan Kelly and the Dees, is not explained.

August 4 'Illustrissimus' came from Krumlov to Třeboň, 'and there on Friday before dinner came up to Mr Dyer, who lay in my chamber, and entertained him honourably.' Illustrissimus sometimes denotes Laski, sometimes Rožmberk in Dee's diary; it probably refers to Rožmberk here, though Laski came to Třeboň for two days in November. Dyer left on August 9. It is not the last we shall see of him.

28

In November Dee wrote to Queen Elizabeth, congratulating her on the English victory over the Spanish armada, and promising to return. Was this because her invitation to return was one he could not refuse, or because the domestic situation at Třeboň had become intolerable?

To the most puissant and peerless Princess Elizabeth, by the grace of God, of England, France and Ireland the most renowned queen, her most excellent royal Majesty.

Most sovereign lady, the God of heaven and earth, who has mightily and evidently given unto your most excellent royal Majesty this wonderful triumphant victory against your mortal enemies, be always thanked, praised and glorified: and the same God almighty evermore direct and defend your most royal highness from all evil and encumbrance: and finish and confirm in your most excellent Majesty royal the blessings long since both decreed and offered; yea, even into your most gracious royal bosom and lap. Happy are they that can perceive, and so obey, the pleasant call of the mighty lady, Opportunity. And therefore, finding our duty concurrent with a most secret beck of the said gracious Princess Lady Opportunity, now to embrace, and enjoy, your most excellent royal Majesty's high favour, and gracious great clemency, of calling me, Mr Kelly, and our families home, into your British earthly paradise, and monarchy incomparable: (and, that, about a year since, by Mr Justice Young's letters) I and mine (by God's favour and help, and after the most convenient manner we can) will, from henceforth, endeavour ourselves, faithfully, loyally, carefully, warily and diligently to rid and untangle ourselves from hence: and, so, very devoutly, and soundly, at your sacred Majesty's feet, to offer ourselves, and all wherein we are or may be able to serve God and your most excellent royal Majesty. The Lord of Hosts be our help, and guide, therein: and grant unto your most excellent royal Majesty the incomparablest triumphant reign and monarchy that ever was since man's creation. Amen.

Třeboň, in the kingdom of Bohemia, the 10th of November A.D. 1588 old style,

Your sacred and most excellent royal Majesty's most humble and dutiful subject and

servant, John Dee.

Francis Garland, who had come from Prague on November 6 with Kelly and Edward Rowles, Dyer's servant, set off for England with Rowles on November 23, taking Dee's letter to Queen Elizabeth together with letters to Mr Dyer, Mr Young and Edmond Hilton.

Laski came to Třeboň on November 13, leaving two days later. Was this to say farewell to Dee?

29

Dee's departure was now decided upon. Letters of safe conduct arrived from Queen Elizabeth, he records in the *Compendious Rehearsal*.

'Her Majesty most graciously both for my great credit increasing and confirming, as well abroad as at home, and also for the better safety of me and mine to come so long and dangerous a journey and voyage in, as from the farthest parts of the kingdom of Bohemia hither, sent her most princely and royal letters of safe conduct for me, my companion, and our families to all foreign princes and potentates, etc, anno 1588. The copy whereof I received of your honour Mr Secretary Woolley.'

December 4, Dee records, 'I gave to Mr Ed Kelly my glass, so highly and long esteemed of our Queen, and the Emperor Rudolf II, of which mention was made in the preface to Euclid. The letter of 500,000 ducats required.'

Dee described the effect the glass could produce in his preface to the first English translation of Euclid by Billingsley, published in 1570.

'A man to be cursedly afraid of his own shadow; yea, so much to fear, that if you, being alone near a certain glass, and proffer, with dagger or sword, to foin – to stab – at the glass, you shall suddenly be moved to give back (in manner) by reason of an image appearing in the air between you and the glass with like hand, sword or dagger, and with like quickness, foining at your very eye, likewise as you do at the glass. Strange this is to hear of, but more marvellous to behold than these my words can signify; and nevertheless by demonstration optical the order and cause thereof is certified; even so, as the effect is consequent.'

In his *Compendious Rehearsal* Dee records how in 1575 he demonstrated the glass to Queen Elizabeth.

'The Queen's Majesty with her most honourable Privy Council and other her lords and nobility came purposely to have visited my library; but finding that my wife – his first wife – was within four hours before buried out of the house, her Majesty refused to come in; but willed me to fetch my glass so famous, and to show unto her some of the properties of it, which

I did; her Majesty being taken down from her horse (by the Earl of Leicester, master of the horse, by the church wall of Mortlake) did see some of the properties of that glass, to her Majesty's great contentment and delight, and so in most gracious manner did thank me, etc.'

Now he had given it away. Was it a gift to facilitate his departure?

December 18 'I did understand by Mr Kelly that my glass which he had given to my Lord Rožmberk, the Lord Rožmberk had now given it to the Emperor.'

December 23 'I went to the new made city Kaiser Rudolfs Stadt, by Budweis, to oversee what Joachim Reimer had done about making my coaches.'

January 17, 1589 'The humming in my ears began.'

January 20 'Mr Kelly showed me the Lord Rožmberk's letter, where he wrote that of me he heard no more of my going hence, and if Menschik has not performed as he willed him, that if I send him word he will so dispatch me that thereby I shall not need to stay. Marry, as he had confidently heretofore warned Mr Kelly, so now he did request him to take leave of me at my departure, etc. And then Mr Kelly did before my wife confess, that my Lord's desire was that I should not have come hither, from the very beginning of our coming, etc. I also said that he had forgot that by the compass I continued to come hither of necessity.'

January 31 Dee 'sent Edmond Hilton to Prague, and Zacharias Matthias of Budweis, to buy ten or twelve coach horses and saddle horses for three hundred dollars.'

February 12 Hilton returned with nine Hungarian horses. And now the final arrangements were made.

February 4 'I delivered to Mr Kelly the powder, the books, the glass and the bone for the Lord Rožmberk; and he thereupon gave me discharge in writing of his own hand subscribed and sealed.'

February 16 Kelly left for Prague, with John Carpio, Edmond Hilton, Garland, Simkinson and Lodovic.

Nothing further is added. That seems to have been the last farewell.

30

Dee and his family left Třeboň on March 11, 1589. A week later they reached Nuremburg, and after a two day stay, travelled to Frankfurt am Main in another week. A month later, April 19, they reached Bremen. They stayed there for seven months before departing from Stade, on the mouth of the Elbe, on November 19, finally arriving at Gravesend on December 2, 1589.

It was a journey undertaken in style, signalling a triumphal progress, not an ignominious retreat. The details, and the phenomenal expenses (twelve times the annual salary Kelly

received from Dee) are described in the *Compendious Rehearsal*.

My journey of remove homeward from Třeboň castle to Stade cost me more than three thousand dollars, which we account at £600.

Besides the cost of fifteen horses, wherewith I travelled all that journey; of which the twelve, which drew my three coaches were very good and young Hungarian horses, and the other three were Wallachs for the saddle, which fifteen cost one with another £120. (A month after arriving in Bremen, Dee sent the Landgrave of Hesse 'my twelve Hungarian horses.')

The three new coaches made purposely for my foresaid journey with the furniture for the twelve coach horses and with the saddles and bridles for the rest, cost more than threescore pounds – £60.

The charges of wains to carry my goods from Třeboň to Stade, they being sometimes two, and sometimes three, for more easy and light passage in some places, cost above an hundred and ten pounds, which I account, for an hundred of it, under the former sum of £600.

Under which £600 also I do account the charges of the twenty-four soldiers well appointed, which, by virtue of the Emperor's passport, I took up in my way from Diepholz and again from Oldenburg: the charges of the six harquebusiers and musketeers, which the Earl of Oldenburg lent me out of his own garrison there: I gave to one with another a dollar a man for the day, and their meat and drink free.

For the first, eighteen enemies' horsemen well appointed from Lingen and Wilshusen had lain five days attending thereabouts to have set upon me and mine: and at Oldenburg, a Scot (one of the garrison) gave me warning of an ill-minded company, lying and hovering for me in the way, which I was to pass, as by his letter may appear here present. Of the former danger the Landgrave of Hesse's letters to me may give some evidence.

The charges of the four swart-ritters, very well mounted and appointed to attend on me to Stade from Bremen, being honourably and very carefully sent to me by the noble consuls and senators of Bremen, and that with a friendly farewell delivered unto me by the speech of one of their secretaries at my lodgings need not be specified here what it was. For their going with me in two days to Stade, their abode there, and as much homeward, being in all five days' charge – thirty dollars.

This was a very dangerous time to ride abroad in thereabouts, as the merchants of Stade can well remember. 1589, in November.

The excellent learned theologian, the superintendent of Bremen, Mr Dr Christopher Pezelius' verses, printed the night before that my going from Bremen, and the morning of my departure openly delivered to me partly, and partly distributed to the company of students and

citizens attending about us to see us set forth, and to bid us farewell, may be a memorial of some of my good credit grown in that city, and of the day of my coming from it.

I will not enlarge more lines to specify what other charges I was at to further some of her Majesty's services at my lying at Bremen, as seventy dollars given or lent to one Conrad Justus Newbrenner, and about forty given to get some letters of great importance brought over to our sovereign's right honourable privy council in due time.

The charge of my freight and passage from Stade to London for my goods, myself, my wife, children and servants – £10.

So that the total sum of money spent and laid out in and for my remove from Třeboň to London amounts to £796.

Whereby the whole sum of the former damages and losses – £1510. (This was for the damage to his library while he was away).

And the removing charges – £796.

Does amount (with the least) to £2306.

Besides the 110 dollars disbursed at Bremen for dutiful love of Queen and country.

FIFTEEN : SIR EDWARD KELLY, BARON OF BOHEMIA

1

Rudolf was impressed by Kelly's alchemical expertise. At one point he wrote to Rožmberk asking him to release Kelly from his service temporarily in order to supervise a major alchemical work of Rudolf's in progress. Rudolf promised not to detain Kelly, but the operation was a difficult one which needed expert assistance. The letter survives, dated October 27, but with no year given.

And now Kelly became Sir Edward. He gained the Emperor Rudolf's favour, was accepted as a citizen of Bohemia, and granted a patent of Imperial nobility, Equites Aureati. The precise date of Kelly's ennoblement is unclear, but in a report from Třeboň in June 1589 he was already styled Sir Edward.

A document in the British Library dated Prague, February 23, 1590 gives details of Kelly's appointment to the order of the Equites Aureati. It records that Rudolf had good reason to believe that Kelly was of excellent character and respectable stock, had heard much concerning Kelly's endowments of mind and spirit, and had himself had occasion to notice them. These endowments had been manifested both in Kelly's native land and within the Emperor's own territories. Kelly had performed works and demonstrated expertise – unspecified, but presumably alchemical. Apart from his eminent native virtues, Kelly had won praise for his most beautiful virtues and for his loyal devotion to the Emperor, who was therefore now minded to confer upon him membership of the order.

Kelly claimed noble Irish antecedents, according to the records. 'Edward Kelly, born an Englishman, of the knightly kin and house called Imamyi in the county of Conneghaku in the kingdom of Ireland.'

This claim has generally been discounted as a fabrication by Kelly. But drawing on the Irish genealogical compilation, *An Leabhar Muimhneach*, Liam Mac Cóil has shown that these genealogies 'make the Uí Cheallaigh (O'Kelly, Kelly) descendants of Maine. The Uí Mhaine (Hy-Many, Imany) held territory in Connaught, more precisely in east Galway and south Roscommon. It would have been quite normal and proper, therefore – orthography and phrasing aside – for someone called Kelly to say that he was of the noble 'house of Imamyi in the county of Conneghaku' and only a little exhibitionistic.'

Support for Kelly's claim is given in a document preserved in the University library in Kassel, 'The Testimony of Edward Kelly, the Englishman.'

'To all the faithful Christians who will get this letter and see, read or listen to it, Richard

Bingham, the Knight of the Golden Spur of our fine lady Elizabeth, the Queen of England, France and Ireland, etc, by the grace of God, the governor in the provinces of Connacht and Tuam in the above mentioned kingdom of Ireland. Guilielmus, by God's providence the archbishop of Tuam, Ulricus, the count of Clanricarde, Stephanus, by God's mercy the bishop of Kilmacduagh, Egmond Brinkham, the baron of Attenhen, Cornelius Kelly, the lord of Gallegh castle etc and others, whose names are written below. We pass our eternal greetings in the Lord. As it is appropriate, praiseworthy and very meritorious for the nation to reveal and spread the truth under all circumstances. Therefore you should know that we have discovered and verified from a reliable and trustworthy source, that here in the above-mentioned province of Connacht there is an old noble and very famous family or house that is called Kelly, in the region or province which is commonly known as Immaney. Their ancestors were honourable, glorious, illustrious and noble, as it is evident from old writings and other sources of this province. Their excellence and glorious deeds are remembered as outstanding and illustrious by the people who are still alive.

Many of the family or house who are still surviving even now raise and enhance the dignity or their name and family and their reputation remarkably. They proved to be prudent, fair and restrained in peace, when public affairs were entrusted and committed to them by the authority of our above-mentioned Lady, the Queen. However, in war and military service they were so excellent, courageous and brave, both in the times of the ancestors of our above-mentioned Lady and in the times of the same Queen, that a lot of them became famous forever because of their deeds.

‘As far as the property, fortune, possessions and estates of this house and family with the face that the above-mentioned region or province called Immany (whose real and legitimate owners and Lords are the above-mentioned house or family of Kelly, through the particular favour of our above-mentioned Lady the Queen and her ancestors, the Kings of England) stretches for more than 30 English miles in length and over 20 miles in width. The land is so splendid, fruitful and sufficiently rich in good things necessary for life, that many members of this family or house, leading citizens, live their lives sumptuously, compared to the traditions of this kingdom, and with honour. A certain patrician named Kelly, of the blood, progeny or descent of this lineage, house of the above-mentioned family of Kelly emulating the excellence of his ancestors and anxious to bring fame to his name in military affairs, together with many other noble and illustrious men set off for England in the time of Henry VIII, of blessed memory the Serene king of England. After he performed military service in the Gallic war under this king for a long time and with praise, he finally returned to England and

got married there. From his wife he had a son, legitimately procreated and born, Edward Kelly, now a soldier (as they say) living and dwelling in overseas regions, who following in his ancestor's footsteps developed and enhanced his natural disposition through various arts and virtues.

‘As a confirmation and testimony to the facts mentioned before we put our signatures here with our own hands and attached our own seals, together with the royal seal of this province. Given in the city of Galway, the capital of this province, on March 10, 1593 A.D.’

Sir Richard Bingham was a correspondent of Walsingham's. This support for Kelly's claim may have been a generous gesture from the Governor of Connaught. Or it may have been more politically motivated, authenticating Kelly's claims to 'knightly kin' as a way of ensuring his admission to Rudolf's court as part of the Walsingham espionage network. In the mid twentieth century a descendant of Sir Richard's, John Bingham (Lord Clanmorris), was a member of Britain's Secret Intelligence Service, M.I.6. He wrote crime and spy novels, and is said to be in part a model for the spy Smiley in the novels of John Le Carré, who was one of Bingham's colleagues. Bingham's daughter, the novelist Charlotte Bingham, has published two memoirs of the secret service world.

2

The report of June 1589 communicates information from Kelly to Lord Burghley of a Catholic conspiracy to assassinate Queen Elizabeth.

Certain articles of the discovery of high treason, made by Sir Edward Kelly, Baron of Bohemia, unto certain English gentlemen, which came to visit him at Třeboň in the said kingdom, the latter end of June 1589, whose names are here subscribed. (Written upon the backside of the paper following by the Lord Treasurer Burghley).

That fourteen days before the feast of Pentecost last, that one Parkins, born in England and now a Jesuit came from Rome to the city of Prague in Bohemia. And there coming into an inn, where the said Sir E. K. was, and uttering divers novelties, among others he plainly (but as it were in great secrecy) opened to the said Sir E. K. this horrible conspiracy against her Majesty:

1. That there were now seven such ways or means, concluded and agreed upon by the Pope and his confederates, for the murdering of the Queen, that if the first, second, third, fourth and fifth failed, yet were the [plots] etc. in such sort to be executed, that the sixth or seventh should take effect: yes, if all the devils in hell thereunto say nay.

2. And further, Parkins declared, that those ways and means were by him and his coherents to be executed against her Majesty's own person, for the performance whereof he declared

also, that he would forthwith go into England by the way of Danzig. And so from thence, in the habit of a merchant, into England.

That when the said Sir E. K. declared the same strange news to the Lord Rožmberk, Viceroy of Bohemia, the said Rožmberk told Sir Edward that the said Parkins was the right hand, or chief man to the King of Spain and the Pope, in all their treacherous enterprises against England.

3. At the same time and instant the said Rožmberk showed unto Sir E. K. a letter, written by one of the chief of the states of the Low Countries with the Emperor, requesting the Emperor to be a means to take up the matter between them and the King of Spain. And also requesting this Emperor to send them some aid to help them away with the English that were in those provinces.

4. That the said Sir Edward, at his faithful disclosing those things (thus by divine providence come to his knowledge) to these subscribed gentlemen, did furthermore much marvel and wonder, how it was possible that the strangers of the Low Countries, dwelling in England, would or could lend and send unto the Emperor or King of Spain a million of gold at any time or times, to his or their helps: which he of his certain knowledge assured to be done. But he well hoped, that the treason therein by this time was come to the knowledge of some of her Majesty's most honourable privy council.

We Robert Tatton and George Leicester, gentlemen, do witness these articles and the effect of every part of them to have been declared unto us, and Edmond Hilton, servant to the right worshipful John Dee, Esq, by the within named Sir E. K. at our being with him at Třeboň in Bohemia in the end of June last, 1589.

3

Kelly's information was also passed on by Dee. Dee's diary records that on July 30, 1589 Edmond Hilton came from Prague to Bremen and on August 5 'went toward Stade, to go to England, with my letters to disclose the treason of Parkins.' He was accompanied by two Englishmen, Robert Tatton and George Leicester. Leicester was presumably the George Leicester who was victualler of her Majesty's garrisons in the Low Countries. Dee does not explain what his servant was doing in Třeboň and Prague while he himself was at Bremen. Tatton, Leicester and Hilton were still stuck at Stade waiting for a favourable wind for England on August 22, when Dee wrote another letter about Parkins to Walsingham. He also informed Walsingham that Kelly 'my great friend, yet in Bohemia' was 'now in most favourable manner created a Baron of the kingdom of Bohemia; with the grant of a coat of arms: as I have seen in

a large seal, being a lion rampant with [the lion of England] in a bordure, with the year on the seal, viz. 1573, and a motto round it.' The remainder of the letter relayed information that Dee had gathered about affairs in the Low Countries, and a possible agent there he had spotted for recruitment.

4

Kelly had not come to Bremen himself. Dee nonetheless felt his presence: he records, August 2, old style, 'the night following, my terrible dream that Mr Kelly would by force bereave me of my books etc, toward daybreak.'

Kelly was expected. Dee wrote to Mr Justice Young, August 20, that he feared he would have 'to endure this Breamish habitation this winter, because I hear no word of Sir Ed Kelly's approaching, or of Mr Dyer's returning. With patience I intend to await the Lord's disposing of all.'

October 4 he records in his diary that John Hammond set off to see Kelly, 'of whom he hoped to have good help,' and November 3 he writes, 'I resolved to go into England, hoping to meet Mr E. K. at Stade, going also into England; and that I suspected upon Mr Secretary Walsingham's letters.'

November 17 'I met Mr Dyer coming to Stade, even in the middle of the town.'

But he never saw Kelly again.

Dee and his family arrived back in England in December 1589. He now saw at first hand the damage to his equipment and the depletions of his library. He tried in vain to recoup the income owed him from the rectories of Upton-upon-Severn and Long Leadenham.

5

Parkins fought back against the charges Kelly had made. October 1589 he wrote to Sir Thomas Heneage, vice-chancellor, saying that Mr Young had advised him to write to the council for leave to take his voyage to the East parts, being now convinced of his innocence. May 9, 1590 he was assigned £300 for the charges of his journey to Poland and Prussia on the Queen's service. But he still wrote to Walsingham three days later about the trouble Kelly's complaint had caused him.

Right honourable Sir, it has been some comfort unto me to understand by your letter, that my trouble is prolonged, by looking for an answer from Sir Edward Kelly, who has been conjured to deal herein sincerely. So if Kelly deal Christianly with time all will be well. But if he be an evil meaning man as common fame reports, what conjuring will be sufficient to make

him deal sincerely: specially if he follow the counsel of his friends and ghostly fathers the Jesuits, who have vowed their endeavour to trouble this estate and all well-wishers.

I hear say, that this is looked for by Mr Dyer. But seeing he has done long ago with Kelly and since his coming to Stade, many ships are come over, he seems to have some other cause of so long tarriance, wherefore if peradventure he may not return with this fleet, I pray your honour let some order be taken that at least he send over with the same what he has in this matter so that my trouble be not more prolonged upon so little ground as is the uncertain relation of a man of such fame and reference as Kelly is, compared to the sound arguments of my innocence as the King of Poland's letter of commendation the which is not deceitful; the order of my coming home by your warrant and passport; my doings beyond sea, the which as it is notorious have been dutiful to the Queen's Majesty and my country; the notorious hatred, and persecution the which I have many years suffered of the enemies of this estate, and lastly the good opinion of all them that know me.

I doubt not but my Lord Treasurer (if it please you to confer this letter with him) will readily assist you in this Christian cause as is to deliver the just out from the malicious practice of common enemies, so my reverent love toward him and his, in time proved, does persuade me: thus descrying due end of my undeserved trouble: the which seeing I am known to be innocent, of good desert and also that my example and service may be profitable both Christian equity, humanity and politic wisdom requires. I commit your honour to God. The 12 of March 1590.

Yours to command,
Christopher Parkins.

Parkins had been at school at Winchester with Thomas Watson, the Walsingham agent who had offered his services to Laski. In 1566, aged 19, Parkins had entered the Society of Jesus at Rome. He had been an eminent professor among the Jesuits for many years, but gradually became distanced from them. In the mid 1580s he proved himself useful to Burghley, intervening to save Burghley's grandson from trouble after some indiscreet expression of Protestant opinions on a visit to Rome. Parkins is said to have returned to England with the young William Cecil, who recommended him to his grandfather.

In 1587 Parkins was still described in the government's list of recusants abroad as a Jesuit, resident in Prague. What inspired Kelly's letter is unknown. Was it true, or had he been fed misinformation designed to discredit Parkins? Was he trying to present himself as useful to the government? Or was he trying to pre-empt any reports Parkins may have made about him?

Parkins seems to have been imprisoned on his return to England, but was regularly

employed on diplomatic missions after this, and in 1591 was ambassador to Denmark. In December 1591 he was given an annuity of 100 marks, but in 1594 he was still complaining of a lack of fair treatment and asking for a sinecure. He had left all for her Majesty's service, he wrote to Burghley, and had been now five years, a tenth of his life, in patient attendance, sustaining undeserved imprisonment and suspicion. Whether he had always been an English agent, or whether he was recruited after a softening-up spell in prison, is unclear.

6

Sir Edward now flourished as one of Rudolf's favourites. His alchemical transmutations were widely reported. Ashmole records 'Moreover, for nearer and later testimony, I have received it from a credible person, that one Broomfield and Alexander Roberts, told him they had often seen Sir Ed Kelly make projection, and in particular upon a piece of metal cut out of a warming pan, and without Sir Edward's touching or handling it, or melting the metal (only warming it in the fire) the elixir being put thereon, it was transmuted into pure silver: the warming-pan and this piece of it was sent to Queen Elizabeth by her ambassador who then lay at Prague, that by fitting the piece into the place whence it was cut out, it might exactly appear to be one part of that warming-pan. The aforesaid person has likewise seen in the hands of one Mr Frye and Scroope, rings of Sir Edward Kelly's gold, the fashion of which was only gold wire, twisted thrice about the finger; and of these fashioned rings, he gave away, to the value of £4000 at the marriage of one of his servant maids. This was highly generous, but to say truth he was openly profuse, beyond the modest limits of a sober philosopher.' Anthony à Wood adds the detail that the ambassador was 'the Lord Willoughby.'

But Gabriel Plattes writes in *A Caveat for Alchemists* of 'the knavery of Kelly, the grand Impostor of the world ... one of his projections was made before three great men sent over by Q Elizabeth, to see the truth of the business. He gave order to them to buy a warming pan, which they did accordingly, and brought it to him.' Plantes claims that Kelly marked a circle on the pan with a compass, cut the circle out, placed it in a fire until it was red, then poured out some powder which melted over its surface. Kelly then took 'a piece of good gold, taken out of a plate of gold by the compasses' and inserted it into the pan; 'by a trick of legerdemain, or sleight of hand (a thing common, for I have known a porter that could have done it) he conveyed it into the place, and delivered the warming pan into the hands of the spectators who brought it into England, and the noise thereof made almost all men's ears to tingle, and their fingers to itch ... and raised the price of Alchymie books fearfully.' If Kelly was not cheating, Plattes writes, he would have given some of the powder to the spectators to try the experiment,

but no one thought to request it. themselves.

Other reports circulated through Europe. The Bohemian adept Matthias Erbinaus von Brandau wrote around 1630 that he had seen Kelly's tincture, and that Kelly could produce the *Mercurius Solis* in no more than fifteen minutes.

Another occasion is reported by Gassendus at Dr Hájek's house, where with the infusion of a single small drop of red liquid, Kelly transmuted a pound of mercury into gold. Rudolf used Hájek to test out the credentials of alchemists before taking them into his service. This occasion may have been such a test, one which Kelly passed successfully. Nicolas Barnaud, who was living at Hájek's house, is variously reputed to have observed or participated in one of Kelly's transmutations.

According to *Die Edelgeborne*, Hájek's descendants discovered in the house a piece of gold weighing twelve lots which Kelly had made from mercury using only a single grain of his powder. One lot was about sixteen or seventeen grams.

A number of Bohemian manuscripts of the sixteenth and seventeenth century contain alchemical recipes which are ascribed to Kelly; and a Hungarian alchemist claimed to be reiterating the true wisdom of St Dunstan which Kelly had rediscovered and transmitted through Rudolf.

7

Dee had waited in vain for Kelly and finally sailed to England without him. But Dyer's arrival in Stade seems to have been the first of a series of concerted attempts, which included letters from Queen Elizabeth herself, to persuade Kelly to return to England with his alchemical expertise.

Dyer had left London October 1, 1589. Thomas Bodley wrote from the Hague on the 8th, 'Mr Dyer is newly here arrived, and upon his departure for Amsterdam.' He reached Stade on the 20th. The mission was meant to be secret. A letter from Walsingham was delivered to Dyer in January by one of his correspondents in Stade, William Milwarde, deputy governor of the Merchant Adventurers' company, who reported back, February 1, that Dyer 'immediately upon arrival of Mr Hall's ship took his journey upward to hearken after the matter your honour knows of,' and was expected back in ten or twelve days. Milwarde added in a postscript that 'The coming over of Mr Hall's ship was made so public that in manner all merchants in London did not only know of his coming but divers also did write over that she was sent to fetch over Mr D.' The ship no sooner arrived than the news was 'bruided all over the town. I pray that it be no hindrance to his business.'

Dyer was expected to have made contact with Kelly in Prague, as is clear from a letter of March 7, 1590 to Lord Burghley in which an English merchant at Hamburg, William Fowler, reports 'upon my late travel in the countries of Deutschland and Bohemia for her Majesty's service.'

'And coming unto the city of Prague met with the worshipful Mr Kelly, whom after his friendly entertainment and at my departure from thence, delivered unto me a box with the ore and order of the silver mines, for to deliver unto your honour with this letter here enclosed.' Fowler added that since 'I cannot deliver it myself for that some business does stay me for a time, I thought best to send the same by the first unto my servant for to be delivered unto your honour with his said letter, not doubting with God's help but that he himself will be here very shortly, as he fully intended at my coming away. Mr Dyer is gone unto him, and has been now there a month from Stade, and is looked for daily. I hope they will come together, God grant they may, for he is a good subject and to be accounted of.'

Sir Horatio Palavicino arrived in Stade in April with a letter from Walsingham for Dyer. But according to Dee's diary, Dyer had already returned to London by March 14.

8

And now Queen Elizabeth's most senior statesman, William Cecil, Lord Burghley, the Lord Treasurer, wrote to Sir Edward. An undated draft survives in the British Library. 'To Sir Edward Kelly. Exhorting him earnestly, and by command from the Queen, to come on into his own native country. Thereby it might receive the honour and service that his great wisdom and knowledge deserves.'

Good Sir Edward Kelly,

I have received your letter, brought by my very friend, Mr Edward Dyer: with the style whereof and wisdom well mixed and with a natural dutiful regard to your country and sovereign I have been both much delighted and fully satisfied. And for any particular answer to the parts of your letter, I need not otherwise to write thereof, but in this general sort, that I like of all that you have written; although I should have best of all liked of your own access. I will not enter into argument of the misliking I have in that you cannot, for without more particular knowledge of the impediments, I may not give any such censures, as some inconsiderately, yea, uncharitably may do. I perceive by your writing, that you confess a desire to return to your native country; which is very commendable in you. I perceive also by your own words, expressly, that your mind draws you toward your gracious sovereign; whom above all worldly Majesties you desire to serve and please: which intent you also desire me to further. And what

can be required of any Christian subject beyond this offer? No Momus can reprehend this sincerity. And yet nevertheless, I would not have you ignorant, that sundry men, being not acquainted with these your faithful offers and purposes, let not in some sort, since it is seen that you came not with Mr Dyer, to divine variously of your stay, some saying that you do forbear to come, because you cannot perform that indeed which has been reported of you. Some that you are enticed (by such as bear not the Queen nor this realm any good will), not to come to benefit her Majesty. Some allege that your own profession of religion does not agree with ours here. Yea some that maliciously are disposed, say, that you are an impostor [and a deceiver – *deleted*] with your sophistications, as many heretofore, both here and in other countries, have been proved; and that you would fear to be proved such one here, because of danger of severe punishment.

Now, good knight, though I write thus plainly to you, yet such is my credit in Mr Dyer, such is my allowance of your loyal profession, such opinion I do firmly conceive of your wisdom and learning expressed in your letters, such also is my persuasion of your ability to perform that which Mr Dyer has reported, by reason of the estimation, honour, and credit, I see that you have gotten by your behaviour, as I rest only unsatisfied in your delay of coming, and I am expressly commanded by her Majesty to require you to have regard to her honour, and according to the tenor of her former letters, to assure yourself, to be singularly favoured; yea, in respect, of the benefits that you may, by the gifts that God has given, bring to her Majesty, to be honoured, to the comfort of yourself and all yours. And here I need not to use any further arguments to persuade you to this effect, considering natural reason may draw you to be assured of any worldly reward convenient for you, that is in a prince's power, whom you shall make so happy for her surety, as no subject that she has can do the like.

Good knight, therefore let me end my letter with God's holy name: by which I do conjure you, not to keep God's gift from your natural country, but rather to help to make her Majesty a glorious and victorious prince against the malice of hers and God's enemies. Let honest glory move your natural heart, to become honourable rather in your own country than in a strange; and to leave a monument of your name at home to all posterity; let no other country bereave us of this felicity, that only yea only by you, I say, is to be expected; and now let no time be more driven off and lost, considering we are all mortal; you that should be author hereof, and this noble queen that should be the receiver thereof.

All this letter is by me written, as an answer to your letter sent by Mr Dyer. And now I may not omit to thank you for the mountain, or rock that you sent, and was safely brought to me from Stade, which I will place in my house where I do bestow other rare things of workmanship, and shall be a memorial of your kindness. Wishing I might enjoy some small receipt from you, that might comfort my spirits in mine age, rather than my coffers with any wealth: for I esteem health above wealth.

9

The ‘mountain or rock’ that Kelly sent to Burghley was probably a German Handsteine, a model of a mountain made up of assays of ore, stone and crystals, showing in section the layout of the mine-workings with miners at their different tasks. Burghley was known to have an interest in mechanical devices and novelties, which he kept, together with an exhaustive collection of maps, in the cabinets in his studies and galleries.

Burghley’s letter to Kelly scrupulously avoids mentioning alchemy. No doubt this was in case the letter was intercepted. The matter was judged to be a sensitive one. Burghley was certainly deeply interested and was making his inquiries. The February 1590 document from Prague detailing Kelly’s membership of the Equitates Aureati was presumably a response to English queries about Kelly’s status. In March 8, 1590, at the end of a long letter to Sir Horatio Palavicino, Burghley writes, again carefully unspecific, ‘I pray you learn what you can, how Sir Edwd Kelly’s profession may be credited.’

10

Meanwhile another alchemist, Marco Antonio Bragadini, called Mamugnano, had been attracting great attention. He had been born forty years earlier in Cyprus, the illegitimate son of a nobleman. A correspondent of the banking house of the Fuggers reported on his activities in Venice, where he had arrived in November 1589.

He ‘holds banquet daily for five hundred people and lives in princely style in the Palazzo Dandolo on the Giudecca. He literally throws gold about in shovelfuls. This is his recipe: he takes ten ounces of quicksilver, puts it into the fire and mixes it with a drop of liquid, which he carries in an ampulla. Thus it promptly turns into good gold. He has no other wish but to be of good use to his country, the Republic. The day before yesterday he presented to the Secret Council of Ten two ampullas with this liquid, which have been tested in his absence. The first test was found to be successful and it is said to have resulted in six million ducats. I doubt not but that this will appear mighty strange to your grace. It verily sounds like a fairy tale, but your grace will surely believe us, for everything is so obvious that it cannot be doubted.’

By December the alchemist was 'said to be at work now in making five thousand sequins per month at the request of our rulers. Thereafter he will make fifteen or sixteen millions more which he has promised to hand over to it. Day by day he shows himself in great pomp. He makes his friends presents of twenty thousand and more ducats at a time.'

By early January, 1590, however, problems were being reported. 'It is said of our Mamugnano that his craft for transforming quicksilver into gold does suffice for small quantities, but fails to produce larger ones. It is reported that the night before last he made two ingots in the presence of some of our patrician aldermen, each one of the weight of one pound. There no longer exists any doubt in this matter. Discussion, however, is rife amongst some of this city's philosophers as to whether Mamugnano can renew the material wherewith he has made his gold, once it is used up. Some say yes, and others say no, so that it is doubtful what they really think about it.'

By the end of January 'it was realized that his craft did not go beyond one pound of quicksilver, however much various persons begged him to produce more. Thus the belief is now held that his allegations to produce a number of millions have been a great fraud, in which he caused people to believe. For he who can make a small amount of gold should also be able to produce a large quantity. This is the question upon which learned professors hold dispute. Meanwhile he has cut down his expenses, also reduced his banqueting, and is seen about with a smaller suite than formerly.'

Reports on Mamugnano's expertise reached Dee in England. He recorded in his diary for April 7, 1590, 'John Spenser came to me, from Venice new returned, told me of the Venetian philosopher and the goodness of his gold.'

Kelly was apparently unenthusiastic, even hostile. When Mamugnano, after leaving Venice, passed through Prague with his two black mastiffs, Kelly kept him at a distance from the Imperial court. Mamugnano gave soirees, passed himself off as the son of a nobleman, and moved on. He was executed at Munich in April 1591 on the orders of the Duke of Bavaria.

11

Dee had been back in England a month when Kelly's brother visited.

December 23, 1589. 'Mr Thomas Kelly came from Brentford; put me in good hope of Sir Edward Kelly's returning: offered me the loan of ten pounds in gold, and afterwards sent it me in Hungary new ducats by John Croker, the same evening.'

And then there was another enigmatic echo of the spiritual actions and the spirit Madini in the naming of Dee's young daughter. 'The 5th of March (by old account) was Madinia

Newton, my daughter, christened at Mortlake; godfather, Sir George Carey; godmothers, the Lady Cobham and the Lady Walsingham.'

March 17 Dee received a letter from Sir Edward himself by Francis Garland, and through the year they continued to correspond.

But the old network was crumbling.

April 6, 'good Sir Francis Walsingham died at night at eleven o'clock.' William Camden summed up the old spymaster in a brief vignette. 'Sir Francis Walsingham, the Queen's Secretary, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and the Order of the Garter, died of a hard carnosity growing about his testicles, or rather through the violence of his physic. He was a person exceeding wise and industrious and had performed several honourable embassies, a strong and resolute maintainer of the purer religion, a diligent searcher out of hidden secrets, and one who knew excellently well how to win men's affections to him, and to make use of them for his own purposes: insomuch as in sagacity and officious services he surpassed the Queen's expectations; and the papists found fault with him as cunning and subtle in close carrying on his designs and enticing and decoying men into dangers, whilst he diligently studied to discover their secret practices against religion, his prince and country; and that to his great charges, insomuch as he weakened his private estate thereby, and brought himself so far in debt, that he was privately buried in the evening in Paul's church at London without any funeral solemnity.'

No doubt Dee informed Kelly of Walsingham's death.

April 19 'I delivered my letters to Mr Thomas Kelly for his brother Sir Edward Kelly, Knight, at the Emperor's court at Prague. Francis Garland was by, and Mr Thomas Kelly's wife. God send them well thither and hither again.'

June 2 'I wrote to Sir Edward Kelly by Mr William Fowler, merchant, dwelling by Leadenhall.' Fowler had reported to Burghley in March on his meeting with Kelly in Prague.

But the relationship with Kelly continued as fraught as ever.

June 5 'Thomas Simkinson and Antony my man came from beyond the seas to Mortlake.'

June 6, 'Terrible ill news of open enmity of Sir Ed Kelly against me: and of the higher powers their ill opinions conceived of me, etc.'

Then, July 8, 'I received Sir Edward Kelly's letters, dated at Prague the 24 of May new style. No mention is made of his brother Mr Thomas Kelly's being come over.'

July 13 'I went to the Archbishop of Canterbury: talked with him boldly of my right to the parsonages; and to the treatise of Sir Ed Kelly's Alchemy.'

Was Dee claiming some rights to a work of Kelly's, or was it a matter of ownership of a

manuscript? The following year Raph Rabbards organised the first publication of an edition of George Ripley's *The Compound of Alchemy*. Amongst the prefatory essays and verses 'of other notable writers' appeared the poem 'Sir E. K. Concerning the Philosopher's Stone written to his especial good friend, G. S. gent.' Dee also contributed a prefatory poem to the book, 'J. D. gent: in praise of the author and his work,' so he may well have been involved in arranging the publication of the poem by Kelly. Kelly's 'especial good friend G. S. gent' has not been identified. Vincent Bridges has suggested that this was William Shakespeare, 'Gulielmus Shaksper' as his name appears in the record of his baptism. Maybe. Amongst those whose names turn up in these pages are Raleigh, Dyer, Sidney, Marlowe, Royden, Watson, and Spenser. It was a milieu with English literary connections.

Dee's correspondence with Kelly seems to have revived some of their shared interests.

July 16, Dee writes, 'My mind was somewhat bent to deal with my alchemical exercises.'

July 31 'I gave Mr Richard Cavendish the copy of Zacharias' twelve letters, written in French with my own hand; and he promised me, before my wife, never to disclose to any that he has it; and that if he die before me he will restore it again to me; but if I die before him, that he shall deliver it to one of my sons, most apt among them to have it.' Dee had translated Denis Zacaire's *Opusculum Tres-Excellent, de la vraye Philosophie naturelle des Metaux* from the French but the manuscript was destroyed by fire in Kelly's laboratory accident at Třeboň. However Dee's library catalogue lists a copy of the first French edition printed in Antwerp in 1567, and a manuscript also in French. It was presumably this latter that he lent to Cavendish.

August 22 'I received letters from Sir Ed Kelly by Francis Garland.'

12

Kelly replied to Burghley, July 24, 1590.

Right honourable and very good Lord,

I am very glad that my letter and meaning were such as might insinuate some better hope of me and will endeavour this style to the like effect answering the other parts of your lordship's letter by the which I perceive that divers men are diversely affected towards me, some saying that I cannot perform that which has been spoken of me, others that I am enticed by such as bear not the realm nor her Majesty goodwill not to come home or benefit her Majesty, and other sort that my profession of religion does not agree with yours there, the worst men that I am an impostor and that I would fear to be proved such a one there because of danger of severe punishment, etc. To the first I answer thus: whatsoever has been spoken of me and by whom I know not but am assured that no man has commission to repeat any words

formally from me in England to that pretended effect, Mr Dyer excepted who has done the part of a faithful subject and told a truth such as none of these blabbers shall ever overthrow. Thus much for the first.

Now to that I am enticed etc. Those that say so have small experience in my conversation which study to merit by the best kind of life and actions that which is of all men most desired. True fame and withal such reputation as is best convenient for the mind I bear. No such childling I warrant you as may be daded [led like a child learning to walk] with conceited words or promises of subtler shifters than the so-sayers peradventure are. Again such as reward me for my faithful service are not to be counted enticers, neither is my discretion so weak as to apply any service to the enemies of her Majesty or my native country which hitherto I doubt not but that I have well avoided. But if there be any that maliciously dare herein urge me I doubt not but I shall easily prove his wit to be as bad as his malice. For who is he that holds the King of Bohemia for an enemy to our English estate? Or the Spanish and Lord Rožmberk for any of the conspired league? I protest before God the true and sincere love, duty and obedience that I do and always shall bear to her sacred Majesty and the honour of my country; and so an end for this.

Well a word or two with those that find fault with my religion. If they be such as love God themselves, care for honesty, hate pride and covetousness and the filthy sin of lechery: if they prefer not the court before their conscience and Machiavel's doctrine before the word of God then am I of them. And hope shall well conform with their religion, etc. But now I sing of arms and the man. And under your correction my good lord say whatsoever he be in England that is not ashamed to report that I am an imposter I will not be abashed to say that he is a knave and that he lies in his throat and will maintain it with my sword upon his carcase wheresoever I can or shall find it. The reason why I make no exception of persons is because I am assured that a noble mind abhors lying and knows that a filthy mind is always ignoble and therefore cannot look for any such thing but of the viler sort and such as are indeed women's men and paltry fellows.

To conclude, I am not unacquainted with these stormers neither ignorant of the conceited manners also of some great persons which remember not the benefit of fortune nor the place from whence they came. But thinking themselves demigods not only envy their betters at home but also such as can very well want every part and limb of them abroad. At these men's devotion I intend not to light my candle by God's grace. For well may I assure myself that he that can envy honesty ignorantly abroad, will gladly and maliciously tread it down at home. I must crave your honour's pardon for this plain dealing because it is but a necessary answer to

some members of your own letter. But to the rest.

Now I will assure you that I honour and believe your Lordship much. And would be contented to obey your friendly conjuration if it might stand with my reputation and quality.

But being in security, and that in a country full of peace and liberty, seised in lands of inheritance yielding £1500 yearly, incorporated to the kingdom in the second order, of some expectation and use more than vulgar, of his Majesty's privy council (notwithstanding not yet sworn for the love I bear unto my sacred Queen and country), chief regent in and over all the lands and affairs of the Prince Rožmberk: I cannot see how I might easily or honestly depart, much less so steal away, for why such properties belong to a paltry minded man and to him that knows not the use of honour.

A knight I am and sworn to promote virtue and chivalry which I will perform by all endeavour (God helping me) to the uttermost. All attempts therefore that depend not ordinarily upon right reason but terminate themselves in dishonesty shall be far from my course and liking.

Pardon me therefore I pray you that I cannot satisfy your lordship's expectation: because the premises considered the performance of it would be such a blemish as might overthrow the fruit of my some years' painful endeavours and diminish all the honour that I have thereby gotten: than the which nothing can be more troublesome or dismal unto me.

But if it may please my most gracious sovereign and country to redress the injuries done against me heretofore and to call me home to the like honour; assuring me of so much lands of inheritance by year to serve her, as I shall leave behind me in Bohemia for her; then will I declare myself openly, take leave of his Majesty and kingdom and repair home to her highness. This is my resolution. Desiring God to promote it as it shall please him. To whom I pray that your lordship may flourish in all his merciful blessings, to your endless honour in both worlds. And so I wish you all health.

At the 24th of July, anno 90. Libeň .

Your honour's most assured and to be commanded,

Ed Kelly.

Kelly's delight in rejecting the approaches of the English establishment is unmistakable. Perhaps it was injudicious. Perhaps his boasts of knightly duty are too transparently boastful. But he knew that he was dealing with a brutal no less boastful ruling class. It was his moment of triumphant rejection of them all. Let us relish his relishing of it while it lasted.

Kelly wrote to Burghley again on August 10, 1590.

Right honourable and right good Lord,

So it is that I received your letter not by Mr Leigh but by his servant sent of purpose: and find the matter therein contained of your former letter: to the which I hope your Lordship has received my resolute and absolute answer at Garland's hand.

So that if you intend to deal with me and with a knight that desires to do all that shall and may best become him, that will lose no jot of his honour well gotten: that believes with have and hold and not with hear and see, that has some reasonable experience of the world.

Then shall you find me ready to fulfil her Majesty's desires: otherwise you labour in vain with me, for I am not so mad to run away from my present honour and lands to shove for a new. *Satis est per virtutem moxi qua per dedeam vincere.*

Verily I so much honour and love your lordship that I would deny you nothing that might not impeach my credit.

To deal plainly I find my self well at ease. And can well content myself with my present state and will not remove but upon greater reasons than I yet find.

Seeing that your Lordship makes much of the trifle I sent you, I will shortly present you with some better thing. And so take my leave of your lordship assuring you of all service that I can do you.

At Libeň the 10th of August anno 1590.

Your honour's most assured and serviceable and to be commanded,

Kelly.

Sir Horatio Palavicino followed up Burghley's request of March 8 for information about Kelly. He located Francesco Pucci, who wrote him a long, rambling letter from Prague on August 25, 1590, which Palavicino forwarded to Burghley.

'After what has been said to me of that friend Kelly, I have to add that seeing him ever more inconstant in matters of religion and piety and knowing him in matters of friendship long in promises and words but short in deeds, finding him over long months and years vain and intolerably haughty and giving up all hope by now of winning over with my patience and humility that spirit so full of self love and careless in relation to himself regarding every other man whether great or small, learned or ignorant,' Pucci wrote, 'I have resolved to excuse myself from that affair and not to remain any longer at his mercy ... realizing that his pretended

friendship would have reduced me very soon to a genuine servitude and that the offices performed by me from pure charity would be interpreted as baseness ...

‘Therefore on June 20, the day of the festival of Corpus Christi, having declared to him with a clear mind the position of one who is more a friend to him than to his money, in which I have not been backward, nor did I intend to be backward in the future,’ Pucci continued, ‘I concluded to him that in future it is expedient for him and me that I should withdraw from his business and attend to my own affairs, renouncing the expectation and promises of many thousands of thalers that he had made to me some weeks before and renouncing too the promise of 200 thalers per annum which he had promised me and on account of which had paid me 103 ...

Pucci went on to itemise the sums Kelly owed him. The transactions are hard to follow. Apparently some money had been lost between Kraków and Prague the previous year. Pucci had accepted 100 thalers of 150 he claimed, and offered to leave Kelly 80 thalers of the 150 for the expenses of nine months in someone’s house, ‘so that I should not remain in their debt nor subject to their reproofs as I do not willingly remain behind in the office of friendship to those with whom I cleave with such a holy bond, as for the remainder to pray to God for them, and to keep a friendly Christian outlook towards him following my profession and vocation which for twenty years has been and will be for ever, not on earth but in heaven, to convert myself and other men of carnal tendencies.’

According to Pucci, Kelly ‘initially did not hesitate to accept those small sums of money, but soon after having better considered matters and my proposals wanted me to take them back and even arrived at the point of threatening me to recall them and to have me arrested for the 100 thalers. But I replied to him phlegmatically that having thought better of everything I hoped that he would realize I had not deserved to be treated by him in this manner, and thus I left the house and have not returned there and nor am I about to return there while I do not see a way of conduct appropriate to those claims that moved me in the first place to follow in this way each one from that time to this. Let him attend to his own business and since I am well disposed towards his person then I do not see that he should be badly disposed towards mine, since the main thing he should think about is that Count Scotto will find himself on the gallows in twenty days from now.’

Pucci went on to describe a quarrel that had developed between Kelly and Count Scotto. The quarrel, he reported, had been started by Kelly, ‘who wrote that he had it from trustworthy persons that Scotto was speaking unflatteringly of him and was threatening to beat him up, whereby if such was the case he ordered him to indicate the place and the time so that he might

respond with weapon in hand. Scotto replied that he should tell him who these trustworthy persons were and Kelly replied that he was not obliged to do so and that he saw that he was seeking to run away from the fight and that he should respond to the challenge as to whether he wished to meet him in fight or not. Scotto replied that he saw him pricked by conscience and withdrawing from his first impertinences, and that since he was not declaring himself he would always consider that the occasion for the quarrel had been sought by him and that he was not accustomed to quarrel capriciously and he said this not because he was running away but because it was not appropriate to his situation.

After that reply no further letters were seen, and it is already more than ten days and in two days those four letters passed between them, but there was no shortage of threats and ugly accusations on both sides as I understand from someone closer to the matter because as far as I am concerned I do not intend to get involved, and Scotto who for many months has been welcome here and has been in these days very much favoured by the Spanish ambassador and others, even by the papal nuncio himself, had an audience with the Emperor in the garden, which has much less importance than one in his rooms, whereby it is believed that we will get to the bottom of these secrets and many more devices and subtleties will be uncovered, and of which you will be able to have news among other matters, and suffice it to know for the moment that the quarrel in my opinion cannot have an early end without bloodshed, and that all in all I don't believe there is much to choose between them ...

And then Pucci went on to describe at length his own poverty and debts and to ask for money.

15

Count Scotto, the Italian alchemist, was a sinister figure. Also known as Scoto or Scota or Scotta or Scotti, and variously given the first name Geronimo or Alessandro or Giovanni, he had arrived in Prague earlier that year.

In March 1590 the Fugger banking house was informed by one of its correspondents that an itinerant alchemist, 'a native of Scotland, has arrived in Prague with 35 horses. He gives himself out as a real artist who knows how to make gold, and is not inferior to Mamugnano in Venice.'

In August there was a further report from Prague. 'On a Monday recently a Scotsman said to be an adept in the black arts came into the town. He moved in with forty fine horses ridden by twenty of his servants and with three coaches. One of these is very handsome and upholstered in red velvet. He rode in it himself. He occupies magnificent apartments in the old

town and is visited by many of the nobility and gentry. Whether he will stay here long is unknown.'

The Fuggers' correspondent was misinformed about the nationality of this alchemist; he was not a Scotsman but an Italian, Count Scotto, who claimed to belong to a noble family from Piacenza in Parma. He had been attached to the court of Ferdinand II of Tyrol, Rudolf's uncle, in the 1570s, and went to Prague in 1583. He lodged initially in an inn in the Old Town, but soon established himself in the castle. Mikulas Dacicky wrote in his memoirs under the year 1591: 'A certain Italian living in Prague, who deceived and tricked the people with his sinister cunning, was especially known for his diabolical legerdemain. His name was Scotto.' Kelly, it is said, allowed him to practice only astrology, fearful of any rival. His suspicions were well-founded. Count Scotto seems to have played a part in the events that precipitated Kelly's downfall the following year.

16

Since Kelly had not accepted the invitations from Burghley and Queen Elizabeth to return to England, Edward Dyer was once again sent to deal directly with him. Dyer arrived in Prague early in October 1590. He presented his papers to the ministers of state, but the political climate was uneasy and he returned rapidly. Back in Stade he sent a letter to Burghley by Mr Leigh.

Right honourable my very good Lord,

I have been at Prague, where I found not all according to my hope. And because there happened to be many English gentlemen of our nation at that time, I was fain for the present to make short abode, and to take some that the Emperor doubted away with me. Yet did I deliver your Lordship's letter, which was willingly and gratefully received. Their answer is delivered to Mr Leigh, to whom if it please your Lordship to give ear, he can inform you in particular better than I can.

I used all my best means to have gotten some medicine to have satisfied her Majesty by her own blissful sight: but Sir Ed feared to consent thereto, lest the report thereof being blown over, it might be an occasion to kindle jealousy here, whereof he being now of the Emperor's privy counsel, he has more regard than in time past.

My success herein being so contrary to my mind, I cannot yet frame myself to come home: but have thought good to turn back again to Prague, to inform myself better of the state of this business, and to be in the way to do the best service that may lie in me. But all with condition in hope of your lordship's favourable allowance, and I pray God to preserve your lordship in all

comfort, with increase of honour.

At Stade the last day of October, 1590.

Your Lordship, at your commandment, Edward Dyer.

17

The same day, October 31, Kelly wrote to Burghley from Prague.

Right honourable,

Very glad I am that her royal Majesty has seen and liked these my last letters. And am well pleased also, that you account yourself therein fully satisfied. But whereas you move me (as from her Majesty) to make some demonstration in the principal point (as it pleases you to term it) of my science, to the end her Majesty might be the better satisfied, and for the so doing promise me (in her Majesty's behalf) gracious favour, increase of honour and living, I thus answer: if her highness had specified any particular by her gracious own direct or indirect letter, wherein her satisfaction had consisted, it should have taken such performance as the desires of so great a Majesty, and the show of my real love and loyalty towards her might any way require. But because your lordship's letters are too weak in that behalf, and for that the proceedings are so entangled with the tossing of some worthy man's well known and unstainable credit, I thought it fit to take a pause until I learn from her Majesty formally wherein I might honourably serve and satisfy her gracious highness abroad, being settled and contented already with sufficient reputation and living. Thus much for the first side of your letter.

Now to the rest: her Majesty may be most assured that nothing can or shall diminish the faith I owe of duty to her sacred highness and country: neither any part of the desire I have to see and serve her as far as may be possible: nothing doubting but her gracious favour shall prove the only target and triumph in the end, against such as now most maliciously bark at my better fortunes. The rest of your letter I answer with silence. And so commit you to God who grant you the honour you affect in both worlds.

From the court the last of October '90 stilo Gregor. Prague

Your honour's assured and to be commanded

E. Kelly.

18

Dyer returned to Prague in November. According to his modern biographer, Ralph Sargent, Dyer found Kelly so deeply involved with the Emperor that he could not have left the

Empire even had he wished to. ‘Whence came the original suggestion one cannot say, but between the two, Kelly and Dyer, they hit upon an ingenious solution. Since Kelly could not carry away his secret, it was proposed that Dyer should enter into collaboration on the experiments with the expectation that Dyer should eventually learn the method of transmutation for himself ... Dyer accordingly established himself in Kelly’s household and under Kelly’s tutelage plunged into the mysteries of alchemical labour. The whole winter was given over to the pursuit.’

It seems unlikely that Kelly would have shared his secrets. But they certainly did work together. Kelly later recalled this period in a letter to Dyer. ‘An abstract of the letter ’95: 14 September’ is preserved in Ashmole’s papers in the Bodleian library.

‘I was wont with the spirit of wine in glasses, and especially in such vessels as they commonly call pelicans, by the means of the gentle vapour of the bath, to elevate the calces of metals, which by little and little use to sublime themselves unto the top of the said humidity. And thereby took great recreation.

‘Sometime it was a pleasure ... to dissolve the said calces into a clear crystalline liquor, and afterward distilling it by itself once or twice, to admire the subtlety thereof.

‘Yea, honourable sir, you know very well, what delight we took together, when from the metals simply calcined into powder after the usual manner, distilling the liquor so prepared with the same we converted appropriate bodies (as our astronomy inferior teaches) into mercury their first matter.’

19

Dyer’s involvement with Kelly is the subject of one of Francis Bacon’s *Apophthegms*:

Sir Edward Dyer, a grave and wise gentleman, did much believe in Kelly the alchemist, that he did indeed the work, and made gold: insomuch that he went into Germany, where Kelly then was, to inform himself fully thereof. After his return, he dined with my lord of Canterbury, where at that time was at the table Dr Brown the physician. They fell in talk of Kelly. Sir Edward Dyer, turning to the archbishop said, ‘I do assure your grace, that that I shall tell you is truth, I am an eyewitness thereof; and if I had not seen it, I should not have believed it. I saw Mr Kelly put of the base metal into the crucible; and after it was set a little upon the fire, and a very small quantity of medicine put in, and stirred with a stick of wood, it came forth in great proportion, perfect gold; to the touch, to the hammer, to the test.’

My lord archbishop said, ‘You had need take heed what you say, Sir Edward Dyer, for here is an infidel at the board.’

Sir Edward Dyer said again pleasantly, 'I would have looked for an infidel sooner in any place than at your grace's table.'

'What say you, Dr Brown?' says the bishop.

Dr Brown answered, after his blunt and huddling manner, 'The gentleman has spoken enough for me.'

'Why,' says the bishop, 'What has he said?'

'Marry,' says Dr Brown, 'he said, he would not have believed it, except he had seen it, as no more will I.'

20

Kelly was flourishing and wealthy under the patronage of Rudolf and the Rožmberks. Back at Mortlake Dee was doing considerably less well from Queen Elizabeth. He records a couple of meetings with her when she had been riding in Richmond Park.

December 4. 'The Queen's Majesty called for me at my door as she passed by, and I met her at East Sheen gate, where she graciously, putting down her mask, did say with merry cheer, "I thank thee, Dee; there was never promise made but it was broken or kept."

I understood her Majesty to mean of the hundred angels she promised to have sent me this day, as she yester night told Mr Richard Cavendish.'

But two days later she sent him half the amount. And if she seems never to have sent the second half, she at least gave him permission to try and make his own gold.

December 16, 'Mr Cavendish received from the Queen's Majesty warrant by word of mouth to assure me to do what I would in philosophy and alchemy, and none should check, control, or molest me; and she said that she would ere long send me £50 more to make up the hundred pound.'

21

February 18, 1591, Kelly wrote to Burghley.

Right Honourable,

I had forgotten to let you understand in my last letter that I would shortly send you that some good thing you desired for you health. And also to let you know that I am much devoted to your favour much regarding and maintaining, so that if there be anything within my service may please you in these domains I offer it unto you heartily and as constantly. And so I pray you consider it. By Mr Dyer your great follower and true friend I received your salutations. And will thank you for them as at his return you shall better know. And so I wish you increase

of honour.

From Prague this 18 of February, anno 91.

Your lordship's to command,

E. Kelly.

22

There are various Czech stories, not all authenticated, of Kelly at the height of his success. In addition to favour from Rudolf, Kelly received from Rožmberk two fiefs with their villages, Libeřice and Nová Libeň near Jílové. Vladimír Karpenko writes that while at Třeboň, Kelly received or purchased one small castle, nine villages, and two houses in Prague. Josef Svátek, writing in the 1890s, has Kelly buying a brewery, mill and property in Jílové and gradually gaining a monopoly over the food trade in the district, raising prices, ignoring the protesting populace. When he wasn't on his estates he was in Prague, indulging in orgies of wine and women. Reputedly he bought a house in Dobytci trh, the Cattle Market, in which none other than Dr Faust was supposed to have lived.

He certainly became wealthy. A recent Czech writer, Ivan Sviták, has suggested that Kelly reprocessed the waste of the Jílové mines, using mercury to extract quantities of gold, invisible to the naked eye, from dumps reaching back to the tenth century.

He is said to have been less than enthusiastic about the various other travelling alchemists who converged on Prague. Mamugnano he kept at a distance. Similarly, when Michael Sendivogius arrived in 1590, Kelly is said to have lodged him in one of his houses at Jílové, to prevent his becoming a rival for Rudolf's patronage. Sendivogius nonetheless found other patrons, established a reputation for gold making and for wonder cures, and by 1594 had entered Rudolf's service and established himself as one of his confidants and alchemical associates. As for Count Scotto, with whom Kelly had already quarrelled, he now played a part in the disastrous series of events that led to Kelly's downfall.

April 30, 1591 a warrant was issued for Kelly's arrest. He was described as being of average height, with long, black hair, a thin black beard, and 'so injured on one thigh that he has to use a wooden leg.' Back in April 1586 the papal nuncio, Filippo Sega, had referred to Kelly as 'il zoppo', the cripple: but this is the first specific mention of a wooden leg.

SIXTEEN : THE FALL

1

Events now took a dramatic turn.

At the end of April 1591, the young Henry Wotton visited Prague from Vienna where he had been living for six months, studying Greek manuscripts and political treatises in the imperial library. 'The circumstances and grounds of my travel have (before I came forth) been laid at home', Wotton wrote to Lord Zouche. The likelihood is that he was actively engaged in intelligence work. He stayed in Prague only briefly, and then went on to Frankfurt before the end of May.

In the British Library is 'the true copy of a letter written from Frankfurt the 15th of May.' Traditionally ascribed to 'an English merchant lately at Prague' since it mentions attending the Leipzig market, it is addressed to Henry's half-brother, Edward Wotton, who had spent some years in Naples as one of Walsingham's agents. The Boughton House familiarly mentioned in the third paragraph was the Wottons' childhood home. The date coincides with Henry's visit to Prague and Frankfurt. The letter, which follows, is surely by Henry Wotton.

To Prague I came on the 28th April, making my journey so as I might fall in with the end of the Leipzig mart because of the occasion for Frankfurt with the merchants of Cologne and Strasbourg.

At my first coming, I was advertised that there were many English in the town. Upon which I meant not to discover myself, till I had sounded out what they were, the state they bore, and what course they took. Word was given me that one Mr Dyer was in Sir Edward Kelly's house, and another page with one of the Leighs in the town and two or three other captains which departed (as I was informed) that day to Nürnberg: I did think the next day to offer my duty to Mr Dyer, in mean while happened this alteration.

His Majesty on the last of April about twelve of the clock sent the most part of the gentlemen of the guard and the other down from the court castle to Sir Edward Kelly's house with commandment to bring him up bound, the cause concealed, the house chosen as it was thought that he might be taken at dinner. And because it seemed somewhat a hard proceeding to enter the house of a councillor of estate with the guard alone, they had joined unto them the captain and lieutenant of the castle, provost of the town, and secretary in the state of Bohemia.

The officers coming in found him not there but as some said upon intelligence from a secret friend in the court departed a little before, which by reason of the little distance between the court and Sir Edward's lodging (being no further than from Boughton house to the

vineyard) was unprovable, especially being not able to go, so that some time must be spent in the preparation of a horse or coach. Others said, that he was departed the night before which indeed was the right truth though done so secretly as his own family was kept from it. The officer finding not the principal seized on the accessories, bound his servants and led them up to prison in sight of the whole town, sealed up the doors of every chamber, used chief extremity on his brother, not without speech that he was tortured which yet was false. Mr Dyer with his servants was commanded to keep the house till further hearing of his Majesty's pleasure. Some say, he kept in upon his own wisdom and judgement which the secretary of Bohemia told me himself, but I dare not affirm it, because I hear of persons in great authority the contrary. It may be he was only admonished without commandment or charge and thence it arose.

His Majesty, advertised that he was gone, is said to have cursed in the Dutch manner, gave forth present order to have the highways set, places suspected to harbour him were searched in the town, a post dispatched toward the Earl Rožmberk his patron with a letter from the Emperor of these contents that if he came unto him, he should deliver him upon his allegiance to the crown of Bohemia. The tumult being over, what should be the cause was the next question. To be weighty and heinous it was conjectured, because it was contrary to the Emperor's humour and course of the house of Austria, to proceed in criminal matters either so violently or so generally. That it touched the Emperor's own person was manifested by keeping it close, at least by interpretation received no otherwise. The causes given forth were these. Some said it was for debt, which though it were probably spoken because I find the supputation of his debt in the town to arise to thirty-two thousand dollars, which he owes to two Cologne merchants that trade with jewels, yet did two reasons make evidently against it.

First because he was known to have much more in present money and lands than his debts came unto and no entry or distraintment heard on upon his unmovables which according to the process of that crown ought to have been in the case of debt.

Secondly to the Emperor he was known to have owed nothing nor ever to have put him in any charge save for coals and house room, and it was not his Majesty's manner to follow the actions of his own subjects, being prince and procurator of his people.

Others said that the Duke of Bavaria examining the gold-maker of Venice (whom he executed at Munich the 25 of April) he confessed unto him that he was sworn in one league with Mr Kelly, which the Duke signifying to the Emperor should desire in his letter to have him imprisoned. Of this I can neither find the falsehood nor truth.

A third gave forth that Mr Dyer had brought unto him the Queen's letters to call him

home, which coming to the Emperor's ears and his Majesty seeking to hinder it, imprisonment was thought for the present time a good means to stay his departure and afterward he might be talked further withal. This I take to have been some of his friends' invention to still the people from speaking the worst of him. Whether Mr Dyer brought them or no, I cannot say. The French agent has affirmed it most constantly unto me as likewise that the Emperor was certified of it. A doctor's son in the town told me, he knew the Queen's hand and read the letters having served Sir Philip Sidney sometime in England by whose means he came to the sight of such things. I dare not hasten to believe it, till I hear further grounds of truth, because being letters of secrecy, Mr Dyer a gentleman of rare discretion would have handled it so as they should not have come forth, at least been known that he did bring them which might endanger himself. Till certain advice I will hold the opinion that Sir Edward Kelly has at some time or other vaunted at his table or in his conversation with others, that the Queen has sent for him (as he is a man who takes as I hear a pleasure in speaking that princes desire him.) Howsoever it be, it is likely in this case much to hurt him, the Emperor being assuredly informed that he is sent for.

The fourth cause alleged was that he had at his table spoken perilous words against the Emperor, and the Poples which is the second family of Bohemia who being the old enemies of the Rožmberks and being this present the principal officers of that state as one a privy councillor, another master of the court, a third land officer, a fourth of them president in the appellation, have prevailed with the Emperor to have him imprisoned; so under pretence of public justice, to revenge their own private quarrels upon the Rožmberks who have been both the setters up of Sir Edward Kelly and the principal maintainers of him hitherto.

The fifth report was that his Majesty having long had a throbbing of the heart (as it were an hereditary disease from his father who died of it) by which he often falls into a swoon, Sir Edward Kelly distilled an oil for it which being sent unto the Emperor and Sir Edward's enemies being by persuaded his Majesty it was appointed to poison him. Proof was made of the force in it and it wrought the effect of poison. Some said, the throbbing of the heart was given forth for a colour to hide a more infamous disease which I leave in doubt. The circumstances beat shrewdly about it, for the oil is said to have had the virtue of acting in favour, or otherwise, according to the quantity, which for an inward disease sounds somewhat improbably.

The last reason of his imprisonment which I could by any means receive was that his Majesty three days before his departure should have sent for him to make proof of his art at the court which one Scotto an Italian had disabled him in. Mr Kelly returned answer he was sick and not long after fled. He was taken on the second of May at Soběslav, twelve miles from

Prague, a town belonging to Peter, Earl of Rožmberk, as he was in his journey toward William, Earl of Rožmberk. At first he resisted the officer making answer he was a citizen of Bohemia and a councillor of state. His flight was objected to him which he denied and called it only a visiting of his patron the Earl which he might do either secretly or otherwise. A courier was despatched in post to the court to know the Emperor's will who commanded him to be brought to his Castle Pürglitz, situate three miles from Prague. Mr Dyer was, as I take it, on the 2 of May sent for up to the court with the secretary and another councillor that conducted him in good convenient sort home again. The secretary I spake withal afterwards who commended him for his grave behaviour and answers and added this praise of him that he had so great a grace in courtesy, as *non potuimus ullo modo par referre*. Those were his words.

What will be the conclusion I know not. The action is lese-majesty which the Emperor intends. To have him openly executed there is no fear, because the Earl of Rožmberk will earnestly interpose himself, and in Bohemia it is a rule that his Majesty dares do nothing without the Earl's consent being burgrave of Prague, the immediate person and officer under the crown. If difference should arise between them, the Emperor has cause to think upon his own security, matters going not so as the people would, in the regiment who wait upon such an occasion to work a change in the state. Secretly in the castle it may be done and the Earl not know otherwise than that he lives or is dead by disease, almost grown now to be a common practice in the Empire, and the Palatine specially noted that way. This I fear is either done already or will be done. His servants shall no doubt be set at liberty, one of them I hear was racked. Mr Dyer at his return from the court where he made his answer before the councillors was not fully free as far as I could hear by the French agent's means.

It was a great cross that kept me from Mr Dyer, Sir Edward Kelly, and the rest of the English. The action being treason drew the whole nation into jealousy and for my part I had rather be spectator of a tragedy than an actor. Neither indeed could I well come after the apprehension to either the sight or speech of that honourable gentleman. In Prague I found the state of the Emperor's court otherwise quiet and still, no speech of any marriage with Spain which was stirring in Austria, many offices void by death of great men lately as the Earl of Trivulse, master of the horse, the Lord of Trentiane a councillor of the privy chamber, the Lord of Dietrichstein, master of the court, the vice-chancellor and others, great way for preferment and whole suit made for it and one reason for all, his Majesty is no good paymaster which makes men weary of the time. The constitution of the Emperor's body is lately changed and he is grown very fat though as it seemed unto me rather puffed up than firm flesh howsoever they call it at the court.

May 1591 Burghley replied to Kelly's letter of February 18, unaware that in the meantime Kelly had been arrested.

My most hearty commendations premised. I have cause to thank you, and so I do very heartily for your good, kind letter sent to me by our countryman, Mr Royden: who makes such good report of you, (as does every other man that has had a conversation with you), as that I am comforted to hear their reports. Yet I have the same mingled with some grief, that none of them can give me any good assurance of your return hither; the thing most earnestly desired of all well disposed persons to the Queen's Majesty, and to their countrymen: and what may be the stays thereof, I may rather guess, than judge them of moment, to retain a person of such a value in knowledge and virtue (as I take you to be) from the consummation of your felicity in your own native country: and so having writ to Mr Dyer more largely, I refer myself to his dealing with you: wishing such success without further delay, as may be to the satisfaction of us all here, that love and honour virtue and knowledge in whomsoever we may find it. And I hope to hear from you to have something of your approbation, to strengthen me afore the next winter against my old enemy the gout, which is rather fed by a cold humour than a hot, and principally by a rheumatic head, which I also think receives his imperfection from a stomach not fully digesting the food received. But to affirm what I take to be the most direct cause is, oppression with affairs and lack of liberty against the which no medicinal receipt can serve. And yet I will be glad to make use of any you will send me, with your assurance that it shall do me no harm. And so I pray God to direct you to bestow your gifts that God has given you, rather upon your own prince and country, than upon strangers.

From the court now at my house of Theobalds, the — of May, 1591.

Matthew Royden, who had delivered Kelly's letter from Prague was, like Dyer, a poet and a member of the Sidney circle. He wrote an elegy on Sidney's death, 'A Friend's Passion for his Astrophel.' He was also an associate of the Catholic Lord Strange, a friend of Christopher Marlowe and George Chapman, and he is generally believed to have been part of Walsingham's and Burghley's intelligence networks.

Was Elizabeth's senior statesman really discussing his gout with Kelly? Would a political figure reveal a disabling sickness by letter, so readily interceptible, to an expatriate alchemist who had left England with a charge of coining hanging over his head, and who refused to return home? Or are the comments coded political speculations for Kelly to confirm or deny? Is the rheumatic head Rudolf, the imperfectly digesting stomach Rudolf's advisers, the lack of liberty a comment on Bohemian affairs? And does that imply that Kelly was operating as an

agent for Burghley in Prague, with known agent Royden acting as courier?

Robert Hooke certainly thought so. He speculated that Dee's entire spiritual records were coded accounts of political events. 'And when he returned, he left Kelly with the Emperor, who for several years after kept correspondence with Dr Dee here, which might possibly continue to execute the same design; Kelly being now grown Sir Edward Kelly, and the Emperor's chymist. And in probability Dr Dee might have sufficiently furnished him with cryptography enough to send what intelligences he pleased, without suspicion, which was easily conceived under any other feigned story.'

In probability, perhaps; but Hooke never offers any examples of the alleged cryptographs decoded.

3

May 12, 1591, Burghley wrote to Dyer.

Sir, At one time I have received your two letters; the one of the 15th, the other of the 16th. By both which I perceive you hold fast your first opinion of Sir Edward Kelly, namely, as you write, for that worthy truth in him at the highest point that has been before you reported, and thereto you add in the same letter, that for his perfect love towards her Majesty you think there cannot be found better in any man, move me to expect certainly by your means a perfect resolution in Sir Edward K. without all scruples to return to his native country, to honour her Majesty, as a loyal natural subject, with the fruits of such great knowledge as God has given him. And thereby to yield her some aid to withstand her enemies, to maintain her crown in glory, and generally to comfort all her good subjects by making them to live under her Majesty in security, yea, in triumph over their enemies.

And what greater worldly felicity can any man that ever was born in any country deserve to have? And if his knowledge be as certain as you make it, and his dutiful love be thereto joined, what would you have me think could stay him from coming hither, to attain to this felicity in his own country. All other imagined stays of bruities carried thither of evil speeches here, or of disgraces uttered against him, yea, or of mortal threatenings, as you write, that come hither every fortnight, ought not to stay a man of his valour from the honouring of his sovereign, whom all princes honour, yea, whom the grand seigneur, who despises others, has reverence for her princely virtues and royal acts, but to condemn all flying rumours, in respect of the estimation of such a princess as the Queen is, of her very divine nature almost ready to reward, yea, to honour knowledge in any person, according to the measure thereof. And such account ought he to make of her Majesty's princely assurance, as never was stained with any

breach of promise to them that deserved her favour. And if I knew not to whom I did write, that have had so long experience of her rare virtues and most princely condition, I could use many arguments to move any man never to mistrust her favour, her maintenance, and regarding of any such as should do her any service, according to the value thereof.

And seeing you are fully persuaded of the inestimable value of his service, and by my confident opinion of your wit and affection, I doubt not but you are able to persuade him to remit himself to her Majesty's protection against all impediments that seem to arise of light and very false rumours carried thither; the falsehood of some of them being by me even at this present discovered, that my Lord Chancellor – Sir Christopher Hatton – showed me in a letter from you brought with mine wherein you wrote, that Sir Edw K. is informed that my Lord Chancellor has uttered divers reproachful speeches even afore her Majesty, whereof my lord is notably wronged. For on my faith I never heard my lord use any evil words of him, and he himself, upon the receipt of your letter, has and does avow it upon his faith and honour, and so has protested afore her Majesty, and that he never uttered any reproachful words, either afore her Majesty or out of her presence. Which also her Majesty in my hearing has confirmed, never to have heard his lordship to have depraved him. And this report being so notoriously false, I see not but he may mistrust the rest. Though I think some may be found in some sort true, by these two sorts of men, as in some part I myself have in way of argument heard uttered. One sort seeming to think the action impossible to perform, which is reported of Sir Edw K., conceive that they which make report of their own excellence by setting transmutation of metals into gold by him do notwithstanding contend with the reporters that they are deceived; and so may be to us. Even the wise senate of Venice were the last year notoriously deceived by one that made profession of such a science; yea, that was honoured of the whole state of Venice for the same. And indeed there are many, and not unwise, that do, without malice to Sir Edw K. utter their opinions by speeches in condemnation of him. And yet I am sure, if they shall at any time by demonstration see the effect of his knowledge proved, will honour him, and think that country blessed that have such a member.

There are, I think, some others of another condition, that percuse have no dutiful mind towards her Majesty and their country, that would not Sir Edward Kelly should return to benefit her Majesty and the realm; and such cunningly to utter reproachful speeches, both against his person and his knowledge, of set purpose to be heard by his friends here; from who it is likely such reports be brought. But, Mr Dyer, against these obstacles one only remedy rests; which is the princely authority of her Majesty, which you may assure him, if he shall return, and yield to her Majesty the fruits of that knowledge which you affirm he has, shall

yield to him all kind of contentation for his credit and estimation, and ability to live here in his native country, as far forth as any other prince, to whom he is a stranger by birth, can or will give him.

To conclude with you: if by these and such like reasons you cannot persuade him to come hither, then one of these two things, according to my present opinion, which I have, must needs follow; either that I must certainly think that he cannot perform that which you conceive of him, but that by some cunning, or, as they say, legerdemain, both you and all others have been deceived, as the wisest in Venice were the last year: or else I must in my heart (which I would be most loath to do) condemn him, as an unnatural born man to his country, and a very disloyal subject to a most virtuous godly lady, his sovereign.

While I was writing this letter, report was brought to London by one Kelly, that once served Mr Vice-Chamberlain, and came from Stade, that Sir Edw K. and you were stolen from Prague; which, he says, was told him by a Scottish man that came from Prague; with much more circumstance, as the bearer hereof, your servant, can at length tell you. But until I was better advised to see the unlikelihood of the report, comparing the same with your last letters, I did stay to end my letter one or two days; but your servant being to return, I did not defer it any longer, having only one thing whereof to remember you, which is, that if you cannot obtain Sir Edw Kelly's return personally, yet that you would, for maintenance of your credit, procure some small, though very small portion of the powder to make demonstration in her Majesty's own sight of the perfection of his knowledge.

But if I might have my wish, next to his own coming home, I wish he would, in some secret box, send to her Majesty, for a token, some such portion as might be to her a sum reasonable to defray her charges for this summer for her navy which is now preparing to the sea to withstand the strong navy of Spain, discovered upon the coasts between Brittany and Cornwall within these two days. But wishers and woulders were never good householders. And so I end with my most hearty commendation, hoping to receive some comfortable answer to this long letter.

From the court at my house at Theobalds, where her Majesty has been already ever since Monday this — of this month, and I think departs not until Thursday. Which time I could be contented might have been tripled, so I had but one corn of Sir Edward Kelly's powder.

Burghley's wish for a com of Kelly's powder was heartfelt. The royal visit had cost him over £1,000. As for Burghley's assurances of Elizabeth's generosity, Dyer, who had singularly failed to find reward or patronage from the Queen, must have wondered at that paragraph. Was Burghley being heavily ironic, or simply insensitive? At this point in time there was talk of

appointing a new Secretary, now that Walsingham had died. The Queen had a liking for Dyer, but Burghley wanted to put his son Robert in the position. Burghley got his way.

4

And now Sir Horatio Palavicino wrote to Burghley informing him of Kelly's arrest on the road. Palavicino did not at first know whether Kelly's setting out was Dyer's work or was inspired by his own doubts about being able to maintain himself longer. He was certainly in debt for more than 25,000 ducats, and Palavicino wrote, 'There is good reason to believe that his knowledge of how to make gold is a fraud.' Alchemy was in eclipse this year, he remarked. This art was greatly losing credit there, since the execution of Mamugnano. Later Palavicino heard that Dyer did not flee with Kelly but was left at home, either not told what was happening or uncertain what course to take. It seemed that Dyer was not imprisoned though all the rest of the house were.

Burghley also received a report from Robert Sidney, the governor of Flushing, May 22 1591. 'I had letters lately from Augsburg that the great Italian alchemist Bragadini had about a month ago his head cut off at Munich by the Duke of Bavaria's commandment and that about the same time Kelly had thought to have fled but was brought back and it is thought there he will run the same race that the other did.'

June 4, 1591 a report came from Matthew Greensmith.

'In my last letter I wrote you that a friend of mine wrote me from Prague that Kelly and Mr E. Dyer, or as he wrote an English gentleman, being suddenly departed from there, was post hasted after and stayed twelve miles from Prague where remaining three days the Emperor's pleasure were brought from there and carried to a castle prisoners in Bohemia. Kelly's cunning being doubted and his practice long suspected.

'The 2nd of this month I had news from a friend at Cologne that the 29th April last was hanged at Prague an Englishman sometime of great reputation by the Emperor ... accused and condemned for divers matters of treachery. So that I cannot judge it nobody but Kelly. There was also another hanged with him on a new pair of gallows of great height and the chain wherewith the principal was hanged after he was strangled was over all gilded; and over the gallows copper gold chains hanged and buttons, rings with such like nailed on the gallows, whether they were made of purpose or of Kelly's counterfeiting I know not.'

It turned out to be a false report. Whoever was hanged, it was not Kelly. But the threat of such a fate remained for him.

The House of Fugger was kept informed with a series of reports. They, as bankers, had an interest in people making gold.

May 8, 1591, Prague. You will have heard something concerning the alchemist Kelly. He was recently identified and detained at Soběslav, a small town near Budweis, as he was hastening to Herr von Rožmberk's. This occurred just as he was having fresh horses put to his coach outside the posting house. He was not willing to suffer arrest. Later on His Majesty sent the chief constable and one of his men in one coach and the provost-marshal and some musketeers in another to bring Kelly into imperial jurisdiction at the castle of Pürglitz, and have him locked up there. He was not even allowed a bread knife, everything was taken away. His servants are still here under restraint. But his wife and other women are kept under arrest at home. It would appear that there is something behind all this, we do not yet know what.

May 14, Prague. The English alchemist who has recently been taken to Pürglitz as a prisoner, appeared to be in the depths of despair these latter days and refused to partake of food, so that it was feared he might die. But he has since recovered. His Imperial Majesty has ordered a doctor and councillor of the court to proceed to him, in order to examine him. Various other officers were also sent with orders to extract information, if need be, by torture. Although Herr Peter von Rožmberk has arrived here in place of his brother to find out what were the grounds for the accusations against the alchemist, he has as yet been unable to get at the rights of the matter. Some are of the opinion that Herr von Rožmberk would petition for the release of the alchemist, but it is said that the opposing faction is too strong.

May 21, Prague. There is nothing fresh about our imprisoned English alchemist. He was rather ill, so they looked after him better. He is therefore being treated gingerly. There is evidently something odd about it all.

June 30, Prague. Nothing particular has happened about our English alchemist. He is still behind stone walls, and his brother and servant and their wives are still detained in their residences and in rather poor circumstances.

July 2, Prague. The English alchemist is reported to have been immured at Pürglitz. He is to have no air but that which comes through a hole, through which he can reach for his food bit by bit. It is feared that it will be done with him as with the alchemist at Munich. On examining the accounts of Rožmberk it was found that the Englishman had cost him over three hundred thousand florins. It is amazing that these noblemen have allowed themselves to be duped in such a fashion. He is said to have cost the Emperor near on a thousand Rhenish guilders.

June 10, 1591, Queen Elizabeth wrote to the Emperor Rudolf, to the Elector of Saxony, and to the Landgrave of Hesse, requesting the release of Dyer. She did not write requesting Kelly's release.

The same day the Lord Treasurer issued instructions to Thomas Webbe, to deliver the letters, and to discover what had happened to Dyer and Kelly.

You shall have her Majesty's letter to the Emperor's Majesty, to the Duke of Saxe, the Elector, and to the Landgrave of Hesse, and a general safe conduct for you to all princes and states, to permit you to pass safely through their dominions. When you shall arrive on the other side of the seas, you shall endeavour yourself to understand the truth of the country report made of Mr Edward Dyer's stay or arrest; and accordingly thereto you shall direct your journey towards him. And if he shall be stayed in Prague, or in any other place in Bohemia, or elsewhere, by the Emperor's commandment, you shall do the best you can to give him knowledge, that you are sent to him by her Majesty, to procure his liberty and return. And for that purpose to let him know, that you have her Majesty's special letter to the Emperor's Majesty; which you shall, if he so will, carry to his Majesty, and solicit his delivery. And therein you shall use such reason to the Emperor in defence of Mr Dyer's cause, as he shall inform you to be meet.

But if Mr Dyer be not arrested by the Emperor, but shall be stayed in any other place in the territories of any other prince of the Empire, as the Duke of Saxe, or the Landgrave, then you shall do as the letters to them directed. Or if he be out of their jurisdiction, yet you shall consider, either in your own judgement, or from knowledge had from Mr Dyer, whether you shall seek a mandate from the Emperor from her Majesty's letters, or from the favour of the Duke of Saxe, or the Landgrave. Both which, her Majesty is well assured, will further her Majesty's request.

You shall also inquire diligently where Sir Edward Kelly is arrested, or for what cause; whereof there are divers reports. Some, that he is arrested at the suit of some to whom he is indebted in a sum of twenty-five thousand crowns. Some, that the Emperor has made him a prisoner for abusing of his Majesty, with profession that he could multiply gold, and found therein to have deceived many. By some, that his intention was secretly to have come into England, and here to have served her Majesty with his science; and that by malice of the Pope's nuncio, or the Spanish ambassador, or otherwise by the Emperor, as unwilling to have her Majesty benefited by him with his science. And so in doubtful sort the reports are made;

whereof you seek to inquire the truth. Whereof none shall better inform you than Mr Edward Dyer. If there be any other Englishman stayed with Mr Dyer, you shall do your best to recover their liberty. And as soon after your arrival in Germany you shall understand the truth of Mr Dyer's state, you shall advertise hither.

7

Thomas Webbe arrived in Stade where he met one of Kelly's servants who gave him information which he passed on in a letter to Burghley.

May it please your most honourable Lordship, after eight days being on the seas I arrived at Stade the 26th of June, and attending to my bounden duty I certify unto your honour of such certainties as I have hitherto learned of Sir Edward Kelly's apprehension and Mr Dyer's stay, etc.

It is for a truth reported that Sir Edward Kelly was accused by one Scotto to the Emperor. The effect of his accusation is uncertain, yet some report was that he should practice to poison the Emperor, and others that it was for debt. Upon which his accusation the Emperor sent for him thrice, Sir Edward Kelly always excusing himself that he was not well, and went not. But that night he had word at midnight that he was to be apprehended the next morning, and so instantly departed with one man towards the Lord Rožmberk. The next day somewhat early the Emperor sent his guard for him in great number who brought with them not only chains or fetters but irons of torture. And finding that he was departed they searched his house, broke open his doors, thrust their halberds through his beds or in any place where it might be supposed he might be hid, apprehending his brother and using much violence, in leading him to prison pinnacled like a thief, and there left in chains with all the rest of his servants. And a great guard was left over the Lady Kelly and Mr Dyer, who since has answered such objections as has been laid to him divers times and as I hear thrice in one day, yet now I hear that Mr Dyer is more favourably entreated and is in another lodging where he goes not out: neither can I certify unto your honour that he is restrained, neither shall I be able to certify unto your honour of the particularities of Mr Dyer's trouble until I shall have spoken with himself.

But to proceed with Sir Edward Kelly's apprehension, as I do certainly understand more thus. Departing early he went six Dutch miles towards the Lord Rožmberk to a certain town under his jurisdiction where he being weary and without suspect he reposed himself after dinner on a bed and slept. In which time the Emperor's guards entered, took him, entreated him very ill, cut his doublet open with a knife, searching him, and told him they were by the Emperor's commandment to carry him back again, dead or alive, which they cared not, and so

prisoned he was carried back again to a castle about of five miles from Prague, where he is closely kept, without any manner of access to him. But he proved that he was going to the Lord Rožmberk and that the Lord Rožmberk sent for him and that he was expected at the same time by the Lord Rožmberk. At which time the Lord Rožmberk was sick which caused him to be somewhat long ere he came to the castle in which time all Sir Edward Kelly's lands and goods were seized to the Emperor's behalf: but since the Lord Rožmberk's coming all his men were enlarged, himself better entreated, only deprived of his liberty and friends.

Since which time as I do learn Scotto himself is fled so as no person can say how or whither. Farther at this time I cannot write. But do send this letter to your lordship by a gentleman one of Sir Edward Kelly's men and was prisoner amongst the rest for the same and who perhaps can certify your honour more at large of all courses hitherto passed. Most humbly craving pardon for my long and tedious writing, being bound to certify unto your lordship as much as I could particularly learn, which I could not contain in less. After my coming to Prague I hope I shall write the truth unto your honour as from themselves. And so in most humble duty I do pray to God to preserve your honour in long life with much honour.

From Stade, this 26th of June, 1591.

Your honour, in all humble duty ever to be commanded during life,
Tho. Webbe.

8

And now there is a further mystery. Was the Lady Kelly whom Webbe mentions Joan Cooper of Chipping Norton, 'now Mistress Kelly,' whose birth date Dee recorded in his diary for June 23, 1563. It has been generally assumed that when Kelly's wife left Třeboň, she returned with her brother to England. Had Kelly then married again, as some commentators have speculated? Or did Joan stay in Bohemia with Kelly?

Nowhere in Dee's private diary or in the spiritual transactions is there any reference to the Kellys having children. Indeed Kelly himself is told 'barrenness dwells with you.' Once again, as ever with Kelly, crucial details are missing. But at some time it appears he and Lady Kelly acquired two children, Elizabeth Jane Weston and John Francis Weston. John died in 1600 while a student at Ingoldstadt University, but Elizabeth went on to achieve considerable fame as a Latin poet, Westonia, until her early death in Prague on November 23, 1612.

The editors of Elizabeth Weston's *Collected Writings* established in 2000 that Joan Cooper had been married before she married Kelly. The Chipping Norton parish records show that John Wessone and Joane Cowper were married on 29 June 1579. A son, John, was

christened on 23 July 1580 and Elizabeth, daughter of John Weston was christened 'some time later, seemingly between 4 March and 31 October 1581. John Weston, 'clark', was buried 6 May 1582.' It was at the end of April 1582 that the archangel Michael had instructed Kelly that he should marry.

In her poem on the death of her mother Elizabeth wrote 'When I was an infant of barely six months, I suffered the wound of my father's loss; and shortly afterwards the loss of my two grandmothers, whose special care I had been.' This suggests that when Dee, Kelly and their wives left for Europe with Laski, Joan's children may have been left behind in the care of their grandparents. It is not known when they rejoined their mother and Kelly.

Elizabeth Jane Weston's first book of poems was published when she was twenty in Frankfurt-an-der-Oder: *Poemata Elisa. Joan. Westoniae Anglae, virginis nobilissimae, poemata celeberrimae, linguarum plurimarum perestissimae, studio ac opera G. Martinii a Baldhofen Silesii collecta et amicis communicata*. The title makes the claim that she is of noble birth and fluent in many languages. Her poem 'Westonia de se ipse loquitur' – 'Westonia speaks about herself' – tells us that she was born in England, the home of her ancestors, but now lives in Germany.

In a Latin poem on her early death Nicolaus Maius writes that 'By native custom the British language was her own. In the German tongue she had learned to speak. She discoursed elegantly in Italian, and in the language of Bohemia she was as one native-born. Latin made her famous for her talent wherever it flies upon the lips of learned men.'

Elizabeth Weston records the Kelly connection in a Latin poem, published in Prague in 1606, that she wrote on the death of her mother. 'Upon the death of the noble and high-born woman Lady Joanna, widow of Sir Edward Kelly of Imany, distinguished and well-born knight, councillor of his sacred Imperial Majesty, a most honoured and beloved mother, her daughter poured forth the following elegy.'

'When I was an infant of barely six months, I suffered the wound of my father's loss; and shortly afterwards the loss of my two grandmothers, whose special care I had been. Heaven gave me a step-father, and him I loved as a second father, but death took him. A brother remained to me; yet insatiable death cut him down in the flower of youth ...'

The step-father whom Elizabeth loved as a second father is presumably Kelly, named in the poem's title, and whose widow we are told was Lady Joanna. That she loved him 'as a second father' makes it clear that at some time Joan's children were reunited with her and Kelly, and they lived together in Europe. Whether the children joined them in Prague or had been with them earlier remains unclear. An obituary on Elizabeth by J. M. von Wackenfels

refers to her being 'sprung from famous Weston stock' but researches into various English families called Weston have discovered nothing to identify her background. Elizabeth's poem referring to herself as of noble birth and the obituary on her mother referring to her as being high born might be taken to suggest that the family was titled, as indeed it was after Kelly's ennoblement by Rudolf. But the editors of her poems suggest 'that the frequent claims by her admirers that Westonia came from a glorious and noble family were based on the grandeur and pretensions of the Kelly household in its heyday, and not on any family connections of "John Weston, clerk."'

An epitaph by Nicolaus Maius on Lady Joanna's death refers to her marriage to Kelly, and confirms that she was of English birth.

I, Joanna, who had been wife to the philosopher Kelly,
Buffeted by the changing fortunes of the world, rest here.
The greater the cross I bore, the greater the patient endurance,
The greater the glory in Heaven.
England gave me a native land, Bohemian soil a grave.
My son-in-law and my learned daughter prepare my exequies.
Farewell wicked world: with vain words it is much that
You promise, it is little that you give: and in the end, nothing.
Hail, heavenly homeland! For life's pleasant
Joys I now receive with mind at peace.
You who read this, think on life, and death:
In this world, death stands but one step away from you.

Nicolaus Maius was prefect of the mines at Joachimsthal and the author and editor of alchemical tracts. Dee corresponded with him and Maius visited Třeboň for five days in January 1589.

Another epitaph on Lady Jane begins:
Beneath this stone is laid a matron of masculine intellect,
Joanna, formerly married to Kelly:
Patient in both kinds of fortune; a partner, and to her husband
Faithful unto her final day of death,
Which alone, even though it comes late, parts faithful lovers.

Elizabeth was certainly familiar with the milieu that Kelly and Dee had inhabited. She knew Edward Dyer and Nicholas Maius. She wrote two name day poems for Jindřich z Písnice, a powerful political figure, the deputy chancellor, whose niece Ludmilla had married Kelly's

brother Thomas in 1587. She wrote verses to Peter Vok Rožmberk. Oswald Croll asked her to write a poem which he included in his alchemical work, *Basilica Chymica*. And she wrote a poem to one of her teachers: *Ad Nobilem et literatum virum Dn IOANNEM HAMMONIUM amicum suum colendum, et Magistrum olim studioissimum, gratiarum actionis ergo*. He has been identified with the man Dee hired in Třeboň on August 7, 1588. 'This day I covenanted and hired John Hammond, gentleman, to serve me in his honest services for one year, and to have 30 dollars for his full and all manner of wages.' He may be the John Hammond who became a physician to James I.

But the one person Elizabeth does not mention is Dee himself, which suggests that she was not reunited with her mother and stepfather until after Dee had left Třeboň for England, and the Kellys had settled in Prague. She would then have been eight years old.

9

Webbe presented Queen Elizabeth's letter to Rudolf. She wrote that she had heard that her servant Edward Dyer, sent thither on business by her, had been arrested in Prague for reasons unknown to her. She had always known Dyer to be a man of such virtue and integrity that she could not believe him guilty of any offence. He had been brought up in her court from early youth. She requested that he be freed so that he could return home and to her service as quickly as possible. She wrote in almost identical terms to the Elector of Saxony, begging his help to secure Dyer's release and return to England, if he was detained in the territory of the Elector or his neighbours.

'Possibly Rudolf welcomed the chance to be rid of a person whose presence had proved only a source of trouble,' Dyer's biographer speculates. Whatever reason, Dyer was released and given orders to leave immediately. Webbe and Dyer left Prague early in July 1591 and arrived in England before the end of the month.

There is no record of what Dyer reported to Burghley or to Elizabeth.

10

July 28, 1591 Dee recorded in his diary, 'Mr Dyer sent me twenty angels by Mr Thomas Webbe.'

July 30, 'Reconciliation between Mr Dyer and me solemnized the afternoon on Friday, and on Saturday (the 31st) all day till my going to boat at Mr Webbe's lodging at Rochester House.'

As for Burghley's courier Webbe, two years later he found himself on one of those

mysteriously recurrent charges of coining that were also alleged about Kelly ten years earlier and about Marlowe. Dee notes in his diary that Webbe was committed to the Marchelsea, December 24, 1593, 'got out' on Christmas day, and was 'taken' the following day. Dee visited him there January 26, 1594.

March 10, Dee records that he was 'upon a flight of fear because of Mr Webbe's sending for me to come to him to the Marchelsea, now when he looked to be condemned on the Monday or Tuesday next.'

Webbe was fortunate enough to receive a pardon.

11

There is more information about Kelly in a letter from Thomas Page, catalogued in the Public Record Office under July 2, 1576, though the year is clearly 1591. From this account it emerges that there had been attempts to involve Kelly in one of those schemes of exploration with which Dee had been closely associated, the Cathay project. Perhaps the English hoped to draw on Kelly's new found wealth. Rudolf's suspicions that Kelly was still dealing with the English is confirmed, and the speed with which Page got out of Prague suggests things may not have been utterly above board.

Page writes: For as much as your honourable pleasure would be acquainted with the manner of my travels, so it is that having passed many great suits in the law and encountered with too great an adversary, the best part of my estate spent in the defending of the rest, for the recovery thereof I committed myself to several purposes, but not any fully resolved but such as it should please God to minister and occasion after my hopes frustrate of the Low Countries, as also of Sir Edward Kelly for the working him to be a favourer of the attempt of a true discovery for China or the North and East part thereof otherwise called Cathay, which enterprise of him greatly commended, but not allowing the weakness of the attempt, persuaded the contrary, and it became to be suspended upon better deliberation, as also his own secret business, something for the better furthering thereof in time.

During which time I purposed to bestow myself in the Low Countries until I heard further from him, resting upon nothing but his dispatch, in the pursuit whereof he departed from Prague and was stayed upon the way lying toward the country of the Lord Rožmberk, Mr Dyer remaining still at the house of Sir Ed Kelly, but said to be prisoner with all other Englishmen that could be found or taken upon the way for England. Myself amidst this tempest betook me to my best escape that I could, which I thank God I performed by the benefit of a coach with four good horses, which I here offering unto Mr Leigh place with me in my coach, who

thanking me, said he would shield himself under the French ambassador, with which speech we parted, scarce having leisure of so much talk. Thus travelling by unknown ways I got to Limburg, where I remained fifteen days to know news, but could hear no other than before mentioned, only this more that Sir Ed Kelly should be executed, but immediately countermanded with the truth that it was one Bragadini that was fled from Venice to the Duke of Bavaria, which Bragadini professed the possessing of the philosophical stone, which in respect he could not teach the Duke the secret thereof, was executed at Hamburg.

Opportunity of good shipping being offered, I held it my safest course to cross for England and after for Flanders, but being at Harwich and hearing how contrary the news was reported of Sir Ed Kelly, shipping not ready for Flanders, thought that I could not manifest a graceful mind more in anything than in comforting his mother, to whom I was going with as much speed as I could, (but stayed by the commandment your lordship sent the justices), I considered the news was reported in worse sort than come full out, in respect that he was taken going to the Lord Rožmberk.

Mr Dyer also at Prague there cannot hold any presumption of purpose of flight for England, much less any proof to hurt him, whatsoever he pretended, wherein I can guess somewhat, but hold it fit to be spared except your lordship's further pleasure known whether you will take notice thereof or no. Lies here very fit matter to allege for his going to the Lord Rožmberk concerning a cozening practised by a Portingal – a Portuguese – with certain cups of polished horn resembling agate, and sold for agate by this same Portingal to Sir E. K. to the value of 14 thousand dollars, the one half whereof Sir E. K. paid him, the rest to be paid within a short space, which time expired the Portingal demanded payment but Sir E. K. deferred him, for that he perceived the plot laid to deceive him, which not yet ripe would not fear to prove it, expecting the coming of the Lord Rožmberk to the town, who in respect he is viceroy does determine all controversies in the kingdom, the Portingal importuned his payment.

Sir E. K. delayed him, still expecting the Lord Rožmberk coming, for that their term was then to be holden, who falling sick came not. This payment was urged still by the Portingal in the end by the means of the Spanish ambassador and the papal legate. The Emperor was possessed with the Portingal's plaint, and as Sir E. K. was certified, had granted to send for him with summons, it should seem he prevented by departing before it came, hastening to the Lord Rožmberk to complain him of his wrong, but this the least of many practised against him, contrary whereof the Lord Rožmberk had promised by oath when he first established him with the Emperor.

This so far as I can conjecture was the cause of his departure to the Lord Rožmberk for

anything known to the contrary, although other might be purposed and this opportunity taken as fit to excuse what might be objected, therefore under correction for my rash opinion, I think that all will be in stato quo primo, except that the Emperor be disposed to tyrannise upon him. For Mr Dyer, I could not learn of any matter that they could charge him with, for that he was not in his company.

But against Sir E. K. in respect that he was created his subject, a knight of the Empire and one of his privy council, the truth whereof is not received almost with any in England, but I have this reason to lead me that it is true by an incident that happened at a banquet whither it pleased Sir E. K. to carry me with him, Mr Dyer also present, by the secretary of the Emperor, who coming in the latter end thereof, saluted all the company but not Sir E. K., but began to take exception that he deserved to be more regarded with Sir E. K. in that he had done him a favour in the quick dispatch of a matter which passed his place being secretary, where to Sir E. K. answered that in that he sought to teach him manners, he could not be spared, but must tell him he did but his duty to the Emperor. The matter still aggravated with many other words by the secretary, Sir E. K. bade him remember he spake to a councillor of the Emperor, with such other dignities before named, if not he should know it with the price of his life in these express words (if not) *per deum actum est dete*, whereupon the secretary fled from the table.

The Emperor acquainted herewith, the secretary was chastised and reconciled himself to Sir E. K., all which I write in confirmation of the truth that the Emperor has graced him with these dignities of honour. But yet within this business there was, as after appeared, purposed practice by the secretary to draw him within compass of treason, informing as it is by their laws treason for any of them to report the meeting of each other in council, and the secretary asked him at his first meeting if he knew him not, who knew him no otherwise but by meeting him in council, which, if he had expressed, he had been within compass, but this not growing current it should seem they have practised some other course to bring him within breach of their laws, by colour whereof they might force from him what God has blessed him with, I mean the philosopher's stone which he possesses without question to the contrary, with which knowledge, if God should permit, he is able to perfect all the imperfect metal in the world, which for my part I do not at all marvel at but hold it as a natural secret which God has reserved to be imparted unto the true faithful labourers and delighted in his work not delighting the world but contemplating his divinity and unsearchable works, thus craving humble pardon for my rough hewn discourse, in all duty I rest your honour's proud suppliant, Thomas Page.

Kelly languished in gaol in Bohemia. In 1592 Vilém Rožmberk died. Kelly was now without his foremost protector. He still had friends, however. One of them, Thomas Southwell, who had visited Dee and Kelly at Třeboň, resided at the court of the Brandenburg Elector Johann Georg. He persuaded the Elector to ask Rudolf to release Kelly. The Emperor replied that Kelly was held 'for substantial reasons.'

In England, Dee once again attempted to salvage his own career and finances.

August 9 and 10, 1592 he had meetings with Burghley. 'The Lord Treasurer invited me to dinner at Mr Maynard's at Mortlake, where Sir Robert Cecil and Sir Thomas Cecil and his lady were also. The Lord Treasurer also sent me some venison to supper. He invited me to dinner also the tenth day, where the Lord Cobham came also to dinner, and after dinner he requested the Lord Treasurer to help me to St Cross's, which he promised to do his best in.'

Dee was hoping to be appointed master of St Cross's, an almshouse in Winchester.

On November 9 Anne Russell, Countess of Warwick, delivered a supplication from Dee to the Queen, begging permission to recount the longstanding service he had given her and the state. Two weeks later he was visited by the Queen's commissioners and he presented his case. Written up at their request, it is titled *The Compendious Rehearsal of John Dee* and covers his entire career, the period in Bohemia included, with expenses itemised.

It came to nothing. He was not appointed to St Cross's. He was given some vicarages in the diocese of St. David's, but no income was forthcoming.

January 7, 1593, Dee records, 'I received letters from the Lord Laski from his captainates in Livonia.' Two days later 'I wrote answer again.' Was he tempted to try his fortune in Europe once more, since nothing was turning up in England?

January 20 'I sent my letters for the Lord Laski to be carried in a ship of Dansk called the John of Dansk.' The subject of the correspondence remains unknown.

Later in the year, October 12, he records 'Mr Cornelio Camaiere came from the Lord Laski from Livonia.'

Kelly's presence was still around. March 12 and 13, 'these two nights I dreamed much of Mr Kelly, as if he were in my house familiar with his wife and brother.' Four days later 'Francis Garland came home and brought me a letter from Mr Thomas Kelly.'

Troublesome claims of Dee's occultism now circulated. Thomas Nashe wrote in *Christ's Tears Over Jerusalem* (1593) of popular rumours about the plague then rife.

'They talk of an ox that tolled the bell at Woolwich, and how from an ox he transformed himself to an old man, and from an old man to an infant, and from an infant to a young man.'

Strange prophetic reports (as touching the sickness) they mutter he gave out, when in truth they are nought else but cleanly coined lies, which some pleasant sportive wits have devised, to gull them most grotesquely. Under Mr Dee's name, the like fabulous divinations have they bruited, when (good reverend old man) he is far from any such arrogant prescience, as the superstitious spreaders of it are from peace of conscience.'

Kelly, too, began to feature in the literary record. Gabriel Harvey wrote in *Pierce's Supererogation* (1593), 'I wondered to hear that Kelly had gotten the Golden Fleece, and by virtue thereof was suddenly advanced into so honourable reputation with the Emperor's Majesty; but would have wondered more to have seen a work of supererogation from Nashe: whose wit must not enter the lists of comparison with Kelly's alchemy: howsoever he would seem to have the green lion, and the flying eagle in a box. But Kelly will bid him look to the swollen toad and the dancing fool. Kelly knows his lute of wisdom, and uses his terms of art.'

13

The English authorities continued to maintain an interest in Kelly, and when in 1593 Christopher Parkins was sent with a diplomatic mission to the Emperor, he was also asked to report back on the case. This was the Parkins that Kelly, and Dee, had claimed was a treacherous Jesuit planning the assassination of Queen Elizabeth. Had Kelly got it all wrong? Had there been a personal feud? Had Parkins been a deep cover agent? Or had he indeed been a Jesuit, who was then turned and employed by Burghley?

Parkins' mission was to protest against accusations that Queen Elizabeth was encouraging the Turks against the Emperor, and to offer the services of the English ambassador in Constantinople to mediate a peace between the Emperor and the Turks, with the hope that the Emperor would then persuade the Pope and the King of Spain to withdraw Spanish armies from France and the Netherlands.

July 18, 1593 Parkins reported back to Burghley's son, Sir Robert Cecil, who was now running intelligence operations after Walsingham's death. He included a brief paragraph about Kelly. Dr Kurz, he wrote, had sent him 'a letter enclosed, that Kelly now lying in prison said that he had some time received from her Majesty, requiring of me in the Emperor's name to find some means to certify her Majesty of certain things about Kelly.' The certain things are not spelled out. But two days later, July 20, 1593, Parkins sent back a full report.

To the right honourable Sir Robert Cecil of her Majesty's most honourable privy council.

Right honourable Sir, you required of me at my departure to give you advice of Kelly's estate, what he has either in the opinion of men, or in deed.

Of Kelly's skill I find here in Prague three opinions. The first is that he makes neither gold, neither in truth transmutation of metals, but only that he has a new rare kind of juggling, whereby he seduces some wise men to believe what is not, as common jugglers deceive common people.

Others think this opinion too austere, esteeming that he makes true transmutation of metals yet in such sort that he has thereby loss and no commodity. The ground of this opinion is that he has been apprehended for debt, whereby he is esteemed to want and have need.

Others also think this opinion of little belief, and they esteem that Kelly can do what he will. And that this show of need and want is unto him voluntary and not necessary, standing upon general point of reputation and contempt of dross. Men of this opinion be accounted simple. And those best men about the Emperor be of the second opinion.

This much of his opinion.

This is his state. After he had been proved to dally with jewels of great importance showing that he had will to buy now of one, and now of another, taking them upon credit, and pawning them to the Jews for present money, and redeeming sometimes the jewels of one with the jewels of another as each one urged him, and thereby giving some content to each one at sundry times, by seeing their jewels in his hands forthcoming, at the length some got their jewels from him again, others whose jewels lay irredeemable with the Jews, urged him to their uttermost, and at the length being altogether without satisfaction they complained to the Emperor who called Kelly before him. He excused himself by sickness, yet in the night he hurried toward Rožmberk, and it is thought to seek some remedy to uphold his creditors.

The Emperor forthwith had intelligence that his excuse of sickness was not sincere, whereupon adjoining some offences that had passed before, the Emperor sent to apprehend him in his voyage, the which was performed accordingly. And Kelly apprehended was by the Emperor's order led to the castle called Pürglitz four miles from Prague, where he is now detained.

The former offence is this. Kelly having made many petty proofs of no gain, had made a solemn promise long since of a grand proof the which should be with Caesar's great advantage, but delaying from time to time about the effect it was agreed of a peremptory day, and that more than once, Kelly ever failing and finding some general sleeveless excuse, yet Caesar in the mean season cherished and countenanced him well, daily more and more by this good dealing encouraged to stand upon points of reputation, yet nothing was performed of him accordingly, so that this order of offence joined with the suit of his creditors, and his declining, has been the cause of his imprisonment. And now Caesar offers him his enlargement presently

when he has made his grand proof. He standing upon his reputation, answers that he will not so disgrace his cunning to make any proof until he be fully at liberty. So he remains in hold upon these terms. Thus much I have from the councillors of the Emperor.

Furthermore by the Emperor's order two of his privy council came to my lodging, to salute me and deal with me, about my dispatch, and at the length they declared unto me in the Emperor's name, that Kelly did avail himself of a letter that he said her Majesty wrote unto him, wherein he was required to come home and advance his own country with his skill, with divers promises. In the same letter they said there were certain words written with her Majesty's own hand, the which they showed unto me, and required of me if I could give judgement of them, signifying if Kelly did interpret them too much to his advantage. And at length they required of me in the Emperor's name, if I could give any account of the diminishing of one of his ears, or of his good or evil behaviour in England. Whereunto I answered, that I might seem an unfit man to talk of Kelly without some affection, who has so grievously and falsely offended me, yet setting aside all passion, being required in the name of such a monarch, I would refer what I knew only upon the ground of common report. And so I did.

At the length, when I was departed from Prague and had sent my man back with my packet for Constantinople as I had good ground to do, for the Emperor referred that matter to my arbitrament (the which I did interpret to be a kind of demanding with reputation), the vice-chancellor wrote me a letter signifying that he doubted nothing but that the Emperor would take that packet in good part. As much as appertains to Kelly's matter, he sent me the letter before mentioned and required somewhat of me by his letter in this behalf. Thus much of Kelly.

Back in England Parkins wrote enigmatically to Sir Robert Cecil, November 20, 1593, 'For that I think her Majesty will have no mention made of Kelly's matter that is now dead, I will attend the occasion well to bury it.'

14

Another report was sent by Seth Cokes from Prague, July 28, 1593.

Mr Kelly notwithstanding the great likelihood of his delivery remains still in durance. The opinion of his skill is now nothing, saving amongst those that are given to blow the coals like himself. I have since my coming hither thoroughly sifted out the means he used to maintain his pomp when he triumphed here so greatly. And I find by those that were thoroughly acquainted with many of his shifts, that the philosopher's stone has been nothing

else than the provision of 6,000 ducats of the Baron of Rožmberk, together with an extraction of certain jewels which by the credit he had by the Lord Rožmberk he took up of a Portugall and French jeweller, out of the which being pawned to the Jews he distilled to the value of 16,000 ducats, whereof he melted many and sent the wedges to be sold to the goldsmith, which gave such opinion of his skill that it was thought there would not be lead enough in the country for the operation of his powder, and thus he lived for a while in liberty, till breaking time with the Emperor for performance of the grand proof he promised, and his creditors which were many exclaiming for his debts, he resolved to run away by night, but was brought back again and has remained ever since in prison, where he has had time enough to have used the virtue of the philosopher's stone for the procurement of his liberty; but I can hear of no effects but trifles, which may be wrought by many deceits. I have fully acquainted Mr Parkins with all these matters ...

15

In 1617 Michael Maier published his *Examen fucorum pseudochymicorum*, his study of pseudo-chemists. Examining fifty-six varieties of fraud, he cites Kelly in example forty-seven.

‘Scotus indicated to the Emperor that the tincture of that Englishman Kelly is nothing else but colour abstracted from gold and he said that the Emperor, in order to be sure about it, should demand not the transmutation of one ounce into gold, but of many pounds or a hundred pounds from Kelly, which would not be difficult for him if he had the real tincture. If not, or if it was extracted or needed to be extracted from gold, it would be absolutely impossible as he would not have so much gold to extract so much tincture from. This was related to me by a trustworthy man, at that time sent from England as an envoy in the name of the Queen, who had heard it from Scotus himself. He added that the Emperor, on Scotus' advice, required this of the Englishman and he accepted to do it but was never able to succeed. Whether it is true or not, it makes no difference as I know that many people have different opinions.

‘However, they agree on what they say up to this point, that the same man received a big amount of money from the local prince and with this money he produced some things, which the English considered amazing. This means, that he was exceptionally generous because of the projections he had performs (as a result of which a few ounces of gold are said to be in Prague to this day) and that is why his reputation made him famous far and wide. But when his property was confiscated, he had nothing left. If he had anything except the colour extracted from gold, why did he not live for himself and avoid high positions, from which he would fall

headlong as far as both his life and fame are concerned? However, with his skill of extracting sulphur from gold and projecting it into metals he not only won the prince's favour and a good reputation, but he also got money and fortune. And he would not have been in need of all these if he had not been foolish and a man of very poor judgement and if he had had the real tincture.'

16

And then Kelly was released by the Emperor.

Edward Suliarde reported back to England from Padua, July 3, 1593. 'There is now news that Kelly is set at liberty and in great favour again, but not of sufficient credit until the next post. Some Englishmen here who make themselves believe that they have skill in his art, do despise his doings, affirming that if he can make gold, yet is it with more charge than the value.'

Suliarde's information may have been premature. September 9, Abraham Faulkon wrote to Richard Hesketh in Lancashire. 'As concerning Sir Edward Kelly, his delivery has been the 16th day of October, new style, and is in good health, both fat and merry. Thomas Kelly took me along with him at Libeň, where I was three days by his honour, and received me very courteously, and must sit at table, both dinner and supper, what guests soever his honour had, and promised whatsoever has not been done his honour would do. At my being at Libeň, his honour did fish a pond, and gave me good store of fish home with me likewise.'

Puzzlingly, this letter dated September refers to Kelly's release in October. But Dee also gives an October release date, noting 'the news of Edward Kelly's liberty' in his diary on December 5, and recording it retrospectively for October 4, 1593: 'Sir Edward Kelly set at liberty by the Emperor.' December 9, 1593 Seth Cockes confirmed from Padua that 'Mr Kelly is discharged of his long imprisonment and in great credit with the Emperor.'

17

August 28, 1593, Burghley despatched a letter to Kelly by a courier called William Hall. The record of the dispatch survives in the Cecil collection at Hatfield, but the contents of the letter are unknown. It has been suggested that William Hall was an alias used by none other than William Shakespeare on secret service work. Maybe. The message involved communications to Kelly in connection with the Hesketh conspiracy, another doomed attempt to create a Catholic uprising in Britain.

Sir Robert Cecil had devised a scheme to test the loyalty of Lord Strange, who was suspected of Roman Catholic sympathies. A letter was sent to him by one of the exiled English

papists living in Prague, calling for a Catholic insurrection. If Strange failed to report the letter, his treachery could be assumed. Richard Hesketh had been living in Prague for three years. In September 1593 he returned to England and stopped at the White Lion Inn in Islington on his way to Lord Strange's seat in Lancashire, and was given the letter by 'Mr Hickman', possibly Dee's former skryer Bartholomew Hickman, or his brother. Hesketh delivered the letter to Strange, who reported it. Hesketh was arrested in October, and hanged drawn and quartered at St Albans on November 29. Strange himself died an agonising death from poisoning, or as he himself suspected, witchcraft, four months later, April 16, 1594.

Since Kelly was still in gaol at the time of both the planning and the events of the Hesketh conspiracy, his active involvement in it as participant, provocateur or informer is unlikely. The names of Kelly, Lady Kelly, and his brother Thomas are certainly mentioned in the documents of the investigation. But there is nothing to suggest any involvement by them in the affair.

October 15 Richard Hesketh wrote from imprisonment to Lord Cobham or Sir Robert Cecil. 'Besides it were convenient to understand whether Mr Dyer understand of my imprisonment or not, for if it be bruited amongst his men or followers, they will straight write to my Lady Kelly or Mr Thomas Kelly, in respect of that I told your honour the other day, and then the goldsmith will know it, and he will tell the Father Jesuit, and the Jesuit the Cardinal, so shall your honour never have them, which would be a great hindrance to the satisfaction of your honour in my behalf. If Mr Dyer, nor his, have written nothing, it were good they should not, under your honour's favours.'

December 8, 1593, a Jesuit priest in Prague, Thomas Stephenson, wrote to Richard Hesketh. In the course of his letter he remarked, 'Our Lord send us a King, and some more comfort after so many surging waves. Mr Thomas is in health. I have been with him twice. Sir Edward is at Libeň, not yet in his flower. Mr Hammon is become a new man, and I hope will continue. Commend me to your good bedfellow, though unacquainted. I beseech you deliver my letter to Mr Leigh.'

Mr Thomas may have been Thomas Kelly, Mr Hammon may be John Hammond, Sir Edward is certainly Kelly, now at liberty on his Libeň estate.

Stephenson also wrote to Henry Leigh the same day. 'Courtesy compels me to write, and our old acquaintance moves me continually to remember you: I marvelled of your so sudden departure from us, without any further notifying your meaning, but you, I doubt not, did all for the best, and so, as I understand, it has fallen out, and wrote of you from London, that you were become a good subject for the current time. However it be, no tales, nor talk nor flying words shall make my will to shrink, so long as I live I will not leave dearly on you to think. I desire

heartily to see you. Sir Edward is at Libeň , and was delivered two months ago.’

Henry Leigh had served as a courier for letters between Burghley and Kelly and Dyer in August and October, 1590. ‘His lodging was wont to be about Holborn bridge,’ the Earl of Huntingdon informed Sir Robert Cecil. He may well be the Harry Lee who offered Kelly an annuity of forty pounds a year, referred to in Kelly’s dispute with Dee, June 29, 1583. Being mentioned in Stephenson’s intercepted correspondence caused Leigh considerable trouble, and in December 1593 he wrote the Earl of Huntingdon an account of his acquaintance with Kelly and Stephenson at the time of Kelly’s arrest.

First, I, the said Henry, do confess that after I had overspent my whole estate in her Majesty’s service, without any recompense, and by the cause of my fortune was driven to go to Prague, to seek some favour of Sir Edward Kelly, I did there see the said Thomas Stephenson in the company of one Richard Tankard, an Englishman, who did divers times resort to Sir Edward Kelly’s house. And not long after the surprising of Sir Edward Kelly and all the Englishmen that were then at Prague, it was my chance to meet the said Stephenson upon Prague bridge, where he began to dissuade me from that melancholy wherewith it seemed to him I was oppressed, offering unto me all love and service to steal me in that so dangerous a time for all Englishmen, the rather because, he said, he had been brought up as a boy and found favour of one Mr Leigh of Brandon, in the Bishopric of Durham. All which his courtesy and offers of friendship at that time I was content to accept of, the rather for that Mr Dyer was then close prisoner, with whom I could have no conference, nor receive direction what I might best do for the furtherance of her Majesty’s service in that behalf. And I thought it not amiss to entertain him at that time, as well for my own safety and liberty, as also to understand by him from time to time the proceedings in Sir Edward Kelly’s case with the Emperor, for that one Methur and one Aquensis, which were in the college with him, were confessors and special inflamers of the Popes, the great family of Bohemia, against Sir Edward Kelly, and the said Popes were as it were *in sinu Caesaris*; so as I purposed by that means to await the best opportunity to do her Majesty’s service. And as touching any other conference with him or any other, tending to the lessening of my faith and allegiance to my most gracious sovereign or the damage of my country, I defy the whole world, yea, I defy my own thoughts, and for the resolved errors therein, without presumption may I speak it, I will neither ask God nor her Majesty forgiveness, for even he who gave me patience and constancy to endure and withstand the temptations and assaults of extremest necessity can and will plead my innocency for my delivery, for he has promised never to leave me finally destitute. For assured proof whereof I have these testimonies, for even when I was almost in despair of any comfort in mine own

country, and as it were plunged in the depths of desolation abroad by the change of Sir Edward Kelly's fortune, having then neither money nor means to maintain me, yet even at that time when all Englishmen in Prague were in prison and none durst speak, did God of his grace renew in me remembrance of my love and duty to my natural and most gracious prince, and gave me courage to challenge the combat against two insolent Italians, who had depraved her Majesty with dishonourable speeches, and also to resist and disgrace a chaplain of Maximilian's at Vienna for the like; and notwithstanding the extremity of my want, God never suffered my heart to slide, so much as to harbour a thought to receive entertainment in any service contrary to her Majesty, but rather did study which way to do her acceptable service, as may appear by a note of the course of my time delivered to my lord Treasurer.

As touching the contents of the letter sent from Stephenson to me, which it has pleased your honour to show me, I trust to discharge myself, for though I cannot let or prevent any man to write to me, yet does the very first part give testimony to the world that he had not any way bewitched or entangled me with any covenants of secret love or intercourse of friendship, for that he seems to complain I left him suddenly and unsatisfied, without taking my leave of him, which is a sound argument of the little account and small regard I gave to his charming; for in very truth when I had wrought him so far as I could in Sir Edward Kelly's case, I left him and all his "accomplices" with their trash to themselves; and according to my duty I returned to serve my natural prince and my country.

And whereas the said Stephenson does open his pack of occurents as to Sir Edward Kelly's liberty, he and all men know it was the only matter I managed or dealt in, in those parts.

Leigh wrote a further letter, February 21, 1594, protesting his innocence, to Sir Robert Cecil. In a postscript he remarks,

In the very last of Stephenson's letter mention is made of a letter he received from Mr H. from his house in Lancashire, which I forgot to explain in my answer delivered to my lord of Huntingdon. It seems to me that the letter came from one Mr Hesketh, a Lancashire man, which was at Prague the same time that I was there, and was familiar with Stephenson; but I have not seen him these two years almost.

Leigh admits to having 'seen' Hesketh in Prague, though does not indicate whether he ever spoke to him. He met Stephenson through Richard Tankard, a goldsmith, who knew Kelly. But there is no evidence that Kelly ever met Hesketh, or, indeed, Stephenson.

March 28, 1594 Dee wrote in his diary, 'Mr Garland brought me Sir Ed Kelly and his brother's letters.'

May 18 'Her Majesty sent me again the copy of the letter of E. K. with thanks.'

It is not clear whether it is a copy of a letter from Kelly to Dee or to the Queen.

July 13 Dee's son Michael died; he had been born in Prague in 1585 and named after one of their angelic instructors. In Poland that year Kelly had told Dee that amongst various apparitions he had seen that Michael Dee should die and that Dee would be afflicted by that. Did Dee now recall those times?

September 18 Dee 'sent letters to Sir Ed K and T. K. by one of Mr Dyer's sending.'

November 24 he 'received a letter from Sir Edward Kelly by Rowles.'

The previous day he made an uncharacteristically reminiscing entry in his diary: 'Francis Garland came to England from Prague. Just five years past I came to England from Bremen as Francis Garland came now: but the Stade fleet stayed at Harwich.'

The following year, March 18, 1595, Dee records 'Mr Francis Garland came this morning to visit me and had much talk with me of Sir E. K.'

19

English intelligence continued to monitor Kelly.

Seth Cokes wrote to Sir Robert Cecil from Kraków, April 8, 1595, 'I am now within these two days to depart hence and mean to pass by Prague, because I will see Sir Edward Kelly, who they say enjoys his former favour with the Emperor. Shortly after I mean God willing to be in England.'

In May 1595 another English secret agent was in Prague. He went under the name of John Snowden, but he had been born John Cecil in Worcester in 1558, three years after Kelly was born there. Was this a childhood acquaintance of Kelly's sent to make contact? Or someone with a shared background which he could use to ingratiate himself?

Cokes' information about Kelly's regaining the favour of the Emperor seems to have been true, for on August 12, 1595, Dee records 'I received Sir Edward Kelly's letters of the Emperor's, inviting me to his service again.'

Kelly, it appears, was accepted by the Emperor once more. Was he now able to offer patronage himself? Or was he in need of Dee's assistance? The following month Kelly wrote to Dyer, recalling their experiments. 'Yea, honourable sir, you know very well, what delight we took together ...'

September 2 Dee records in his diary, 'the spider at ten of the clock at night suddenly on

my desk, and suddenly gone; a most rare one in bigness and length of feet. I was in a great study at my desk.'

Meanwhile Kelly's reputation continued to grow. In Thomas Nashe's *Have With You to Saffron-Walden* (1596) someone calls upon Lull and Paracelsus and another character remarks, 'Let him call upon Kelly, who is better than them both; and for the spirits and souls of the ancient alchemists, he has them so close imprisoned in the fiery purgatory of his furnace, that for the wealth of the King of Spain's Indies, it is not possible to release or get the third part of a nit of any one of them to help any but himself.' To which a third character replies, 'Whether you call his fire purgatory or no, the fire of alchemy has wrought such a purgation or purgatory in a great number of men's purses in England that it has clean fired them out of all they have.'

19

And then Kelly was arrested again, November 1, 1596. Czech accounts have it that he was imprisoned for fighting a duel with Georg or Jiri or Jan Hunkler or Humler, variously described as an official of Rudolf's court, and as an assistant to the alchemist Sebald Schwertzer. They are based on an anonymous letter from Regensburg dated November 9, published by Christopher Gottlieb von Murr in 1805, and on a poem about Rudolf's alchemists printed in a book by Johann Anton Soeldner in 1702:

Nach grosser Freude kam Traurigkeit
Mit Jürgen Hunckler kam er in Streit
Kellaeus den Hunckler hat bald erstochen
Das liess der Kayser nicht ungerochen
Kellaeus ins Gefängnis kam.

In Václav Kaplický's novel about Kelly, *Život Alchymistův, The Life of an Alchemist* (1980), Kelly reflects: 'Maybe he ought not to have fought the unfortunate Hunkler. But he had to. Otherwise the whole castle, the Emperor included, would have known his true identity was that of a permanently stigmatized criminal. The man saw his cut off ear.'

In Kaplický's account, Kelly is brought to trial.

'Do you admit you participated in a duel?'

'Yes.'

'Did you challenge Jan Hunkier?'

'Yes.'

'Why?'

'He kept coming to my laboratory to check if my ears had been cut off.'

‘That was probably unpleasant for you,’ one of the judges said.

The president interrupted and asked Kelly, ‘Do you want to tell us why your ears were cut off in England? There is no such punishment here.’

‘As a boy I forged a document at Lancaster to get gold coins to pay my debts. The court did not pardon my youth and my ears were cut off.’

‘What was your age?’

‘Seventeen or eighteen.’

‘Have you worn long hair since?’

‘Yes, I felt ashamed.’

Later in the proceedings Kelly explained: ‘I got very upset when Hunkler tried to reveal my secret. Perhaps I could have restrained myself, but he was overjoyed at finding me without ears. I had long suspected that he gave information to the English, as I caught him several times accompanied by the secretary Montfancon. Then I was angry and unable to control myself.’

Montfancon is an English diplomatic figure in Kaplický’s novel.

‘Did your first shot kill the opponent?’

Kelly raised his voice. ‘I can swear I did not intend to kill him. I held a gun for the first time in my life, I was so excited that I pressed the trigger and it went off immediately.’

Later he claims that he even had his eyes shut.

The court sentenced him to death but Wolf Rumpf intervened with the Emperor, pointing out that Hunkler had been spying for the English, and Rudolf commuted the sentence to life imprisonment.

But Kaplický’s account of other episodes of Kelly’s life bears little or no resemblance to the documentary records, indeed markedly contradicts them, so the historical veracity of his novel is open to question. Much of his material is drawn from an 1890s article by Josef Svátek. Svátek suggests that though Kelly was imprisoned for killing Hunkler, his failure to produce the philosopher’s stone had enraged Rudolf. When Kelly became ill in gaol, Rudolf sent the court physician to cure him, fearful that he would die before revealing his alchemical secrets. When Kelly still refused to deliver, Rudolf ordered the formula to be extracted from him at any cost, including torture. But the secret was not forthcoming.

Whatever the truth of the duel story, and whether or not Kelly’s opponent was killed, other accounts offer an alternative explanation for Kelly’s arrest. Ivan Sviták, writing in the 1980s, has Kelly released from his first imprisonment, fighting in Peter Vok Rožmberk’s army against the Turks in the summer of 1594 near Komárno. Then a certain Krystolf Zelinsky ze Subuzina arranges the confiscation of Kelly’s estate and has him imprisoned for debt.

Karpenko and Purš similarly conclude that it was Kelly's debts that caused his second arrest. Friedrich Hans Hofmann 'bought up all the debts and brought a claim to the Royal Chamber requesting to have the amount be paid in full, which was beyond the capacity of the impoverished alchemist.'

Kelly was now imprisoned for a second time, this time in the state prison at Most, (Brux, in German), a hundred kilometres north-west of Prague. The alchemist Oswald Croll visited him there.

20

The opening of Kelly's treatise *The Stone of the Philosophers*, which he wrote in Latin and dedicated to Rudolf, refers to his two periods in gaol.

'Though I have already twice suffered chains and imprisonment in Bohemia, an indignity which has been offered to me in no other part of the world, yet my mind, remaining unbound, has all this time exercised itself in the study of that philosophy which is despised only by the wicked and foolish, but is praised and admired by the wise. Nay, the saying that none but fools and lawyers hate and despise alchemy has passed into a proverb.

'Furthermore, as during the preceding three years I have used great labour, expense and care in order to discover for your Majesty that which might afford you much profit and pleasure, so during my imprisonment – a calamity which has befallen me through the action of your Majesty – I am utterly incapable of remaining idle. Hence I have written a treatise, by means of which your imperial mind may be guided into all the truth of the more ancient philosophy, whence, as from a lofty eminence, it may contemplate and distinguish the fertile tracts from the barren and stormy wilderness.

'But if my teaching displease you, know that you are still altogether wandering astray from the true scope and aim of this matter, and are utterly wasting your money, time, labour and hope. A familiar acquaintance with the different branches of knowledge has taught me this one thing, that nothing is more ancient, excellent, or more desirable than truth, and whoever neglects it must pass his whole life in the shade. Nevertheless, it always was, and always will be, the way of mankind to release Barabbas and to crucify Christ. This I have – for my good, no doubt – experienced in my own case. I venture to hope, however, that my life and character will so become known to posterity that I may be counted among those who have suffered much for the sake of truth. The full certainty of the present treatise time is powerless to abrogate. If your Majesty will deign to peruse it at your leisure, you will easily perceive that my mind is profoundly versed in this study.'

The treatise was supposed to have been sent by Kelly to Rudolf from prison in 1596. It was published in Hamburg in 1676. The suggestion that Rudolf, or others, had begun to doubt Kelly's abilities and expertise is perhaps supported by Kelly's remark that 'you will easily perceive that my mind is profoundly versed in this study.' It sounds as if he is defending himself against charges of inability or charlatanism.

21

In Kaplický's novel, Kelly, having been in prison for two and a half years, attempted to escape from a window of the castle tower. The rope snapped and he fell into the moat, where he was found unconscious the next day. His leg had to be amputated and was replaced by a wooden one. He was then released from imprisonment by the Emperor at the intercession of the alchemist Michael Sendivogius, but not restored to favour. In rages, with a wooden leg, unlikely to find work, he borrows money, buys new clothes, and fails to pay the tailor. He visits Joan and the children at Most, planning to leave Bohemia for Saxony, but is arrested for his unpaid debts before he has got away and is gaoled once again. This is when he writes his treatises on alchemy.

Other Czech accounts have Kelly's attempted escape, fall, and amputated leg. Josef Svaték wrote in the 1890s that Kelly was released but, unable to satisfy his creditors despite selling off his numerous houses and estates, he was imprisoned for a second time in November 1596. His wife, refusing to renounce him and enter a nunnery, moved to Most with the two children to be close to Most Castle where he was imprisoned again. Some accounts have it that she had property there, either in her own right, or Kelly's. Sendivogius is said to have asked for funds from one of his patrons to buy a house in Jílové that Kelly's wife was forced to sell to raise money. She engaged herself in lengthy legal proceedings in attempting to regain her estates. But according to Svaték a request for an audience with Rudolf resulted only in the threat of imprisonment for her and of the assignment of her children to a monastery. Her daughter Elizabeth refers to the long drawn out legal case to recover property that had been confiscated by the Emperor.

22

A. E. Waite, writing in the 1890s, offers another account of the two imprisonments.

'Meanwhile the powder, diminished by excessive projection, became exhausted; it was squandered still further in futile attempts to increase it and when the Emperor commanded his guest to produce it in a becoming quantity, all experiments proved failures. Yet Kelly had

boasted that he was an adept; he had everywhere paraded his powers; he was not the mere heir of the stone – he was an illuminated and proficient master. The Emperor believed all this, and he believed it even to the end; the impotence of the exhausted alchemist was attributed to obstinacy, and the guest was changed into a prisoner.

‘He is said to have been confined in a dungeon in the castle of Soběslav. To regain his liberty he promised to manufacture the stone, on condition that he returned to Prague and took counsel with Dr Dee. To that city he was consequently permitted to go back, but his house was guarded, and as fresh experiments in the composition of a transmuting powder were abortive as ever, the alchemist, seized with rage, made a futile attempt to escape, which ended in the murder of one of his guards.

A second imprisonment, this time in the castle of Zerner, followed his violence ... At the instance of the philosopher of Mortlake, Queen Elizabeth claimed the alchemist as her subject but the Emperor excused himself from releasing him on the ground of the homicide.’

Waite gives no sources for his account, and his having Kelly imprisoned at Soběslav, which was where he was first arrested, and having Dee still in Prague at this time, when he was back in England, casts doubt on its reliability.

23

The end, like the beginning, remains obscure.

The earliest account is in Dee’s diary, November 25, 1595: ‘news that Sir Edward Kelly was slain.’

But the modern historian of the Emperor’s court, R. J. W. Evans, cites a document indicating that Kelly was definitely alive on May 22, 1597 at the castle of Most. Borbonius thought he was still active in 1598.

John Weever offers the earliest detailed account in *Ancient Funeral Monuments* (1631), more than thirty years after the event, whatever the event might have been.

‘Kelly (otherwise called Talbot) that famous English alchemist of our time, who flying out of his own country (after he had lost both his ears at Lancaster) was entertained with Rudolf the second, and last of that name, Emperor of Germany, for whom Elizabeth of famous memory, sent (very secretly) Captain Peter Gwynne with some others, to persuade him to return back to his own native home, which he was willing to do: and thinking to escape away in the night, by stealth, as he was clambering over a wall in his own house in Prague (which bears his name to this day, and which sometime was an old sanctuary) he fell down from the battlements, broke his legs, and bruised his body; of which hurts a while after he departed this world.’

In Weever's account Kelly is attempting to leave his own house in secrecy. If Kelly was living in one of the houses in the environs of the castle in Prague, the fall down the battlements would have been horrific. There is still a street there known as the street of the alchemists, Zlata ulicka, or Goldmachergasschen, Golden lane, whose houses back onto the wall overlooking the Stag Moat.

Other accounts, however, have Kelly's fatal fall occurring when he was imprisoned at Most Castle.

Elias Ashmole wrote in *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* (1652): 'And though he began to grow into the Emperor's favour, in hopes to be entertained into his service (for so he certified Dr Dee by letters in August 1595) nevertheless he was clapped up again into prison, and attempting to make his escape out of a high window, by the tearing of his sheets, which were tied together to let him down, he (being a weighty man) fell and broke his leg, and thereof died. (The ascendant then coming by direction to the place of the moon with latitude, she being lady of the 8th house in the radix and posited in Aquarius). And this is one report of his death. Others there are, but Dr Dee mentions none at all, of the manner thereof, only this: Nov. 25, 1595. News that Sir E. K. was slain.'

Arthur Dee, Dee's eldest son, gave an account to Sir Thomas Browne, which Browne communicated to Ashmole in 1674.

'He said also that Kelly dealt not justly by his father and that he went away with the greatest part of the powder and was afterward imprisoned by the Emperor in a castle from whence attempting an escape down the wall he fell and broke his leg and was imprisoned again. That his father Dr John Dee presented Queen Elizabeth with a little of the powder, who having made trial thereof attempted to get Kelly out of prison. And sent some to that purpose who giving opium in drink unto the keepers, laid them so fast asleep that Kelly found opportunity to attempt an escape and there were horses ready to carry him away! But the business unhappily succeeded as is before declared.'

Svátek's account, which is followed by Kaplický, has Kelly attempting to escape from Most castle while his brother waited for him with a carriage. But the rope broke and Kelly fell and broke his other leg. November 1, 1597, back in prison, he took his own life by poison that his wife had smuggled into his cell.

Karpenko and Purš write that 'what is presumably the most authentic report about Kelly's imprisonment (and his death) is given in a manuscript written by the evangelical priest, Rudolf's alchemist and seeker of precious stones, Simon Thadeas Budek of Lessino and Falkenberg.'

‘That Keleus when he was imprisoned at the castle of Most (he had a wooden leg and was without both ears, and had long hair), was lowered through the toilet by his wife and daughter in the year 1597 at Christmas time ...

‘His brother awaited him with a carriage, but he (Kelly) fell into a ditch and broke his leg in three places, so he was taken back to the castle to be tended to. He was to be transported to Prague to the Emperor, but he asked to have his wife and daughter with him, which they granted him. He then spoke to his wife in English and Welsh and with his daughter in Latin and asked to have some water brought to him and immediately after ingesting it he died.’

24

And then there is the story that Kelly did not die at all but, using the skills he had acquired as an apothecary in Worcester, merely simulated death, and surfaced in Russia the following year.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND SOURCES

Acknowledgment is gratefully given to the Public Record Office, Kew; to the Keeper of Special Collections and Western Manuscripts, Bodleian Library, Oxford; and to the Department of Manuscripts, British Library for permission to reproduce materials in their possession, itemised below; to Christopher Whitby for permission to use his transcription of Sloane MS 3188, published as *John Dee's Actions with Spirits: 22 December 1581 to 23 May 1583*, Garland Press, New York, 1988; to Edward Fenton for permission to use his transcription of Ashmole MSS 487 and 488, published in *The Diaries of John Dee*, Day Books, Charlbury, 1998; and to the Director of the Warburg Institute, University of London, for permission to reproduce material from 'An Unknown Chapter in the Life of John Dee' by C. H. Josten, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 28 (1965) 223–57.

I am most grateful for assistance in this project to Susan Bassnett, Teresa Burns, John Clucas, H. Neville Davis, Suzanne Kiernan, Vladimír Klima, John Lucas, Stephen Lucas, Bernard Martin, John Roche and Bill Tully; the National Library of Australia; Fisher Library, University of Sydney; the Shakespeare Institute, University of Birmingham; to the University of Sydney for the award of a university research grant; and to the Faculty of Arts, University of Sydney, and the Australian Academy of the Humanities, for publication support for the first edition of this book.

The records of Dee and Kelly's spiritual transactions are preserved in manuscripts in the British Library. The major part are recorded in Cotton Appendix MS XLVI parts I and 2. This was transcribed and published by Meric Casaubon, as *A True and Faithful Relation of What Passed for Many Years Between Dr. John Dee (A Mathematician of Great Fame in Q. Elizabeth and King James their Reignes) and Some Spirits: Tending (had it succeeded) to a General Alteration of most States and Kingdomes in the World*. London, 1659. Elias Ashmole's copy of this book with his annotations and corrections is preserved in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (Ashmole MS 580). The transactions from 22 December 1581 to 23 May 1583 are recorded in British Library manuscript Sloane MS 3188. This was transcribed and edited by Christopher Whitby in a doctoral thesis at the University of Birmingham, 1981, *John Dee's Actions with Spirits: 22 December 1581 to 23 May 1583* and published in two volumes, New York, 1988. A further episode, preserved in the Bodleian Library (Ashmole MS 1790 art 1), was discovered and translated by C. H. Josten as 'An Unknown Chapter in the Life of John Dee,' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 28 (1965) 223–57 and provides the material in chapter eleven.

Dee's diary is found in the margins of two almanacs preserved in the Bodleian Library,

Oxford: the *Ephemerides* of Stadius for 1554–1600 (Cologne, 1570) (Ashmole MS 487), and the *Ephemerides* of Maginus for 1581–1620 (Venice 1582) (Ashmole MS 488). The entries were first transcribed and edited by James Orchard Halliwell in *The Private Diary of Dr John Dee and the Catalogue of his Library of Manuscripts*, London, 1842. A new transcription by Edward Fenton, *The Diaries of John Dee*, Charlbury, 1998, restores deleted passages and corrects Halliwell's transcriptions; Fenton also restores a deleted passage from the spiritual records of 20 May 1587 not printed in Casaubon. Dee's diary of alchemical experiments for 1581 is in MS Rawlinson D 241; excerpt in Fenton, 308-9.

Other materials by and relating to Dee and Kelly are preserved in the Bodleian Library in MS Ashmole 1420 p 328 (Kelly's letter to Dyer); MS Ashmole 1790 f 58, ff 60–1 (Lilly's information from John Evans on Kelly's sister, and Backhouse's story of Kelly and Dee's discovery of the elixir); MS Ashmole 421 ff 220v-l (Lilly's story of the friar and the elixir); MS Ashmole 1788 ff 151–3, ff 159–60 (information from Sir Thomas Browne and Arthur Dee, and William Fowler's letter to Burghley); MS Ballard 14 f 13–14 (Ashmole to Wood 27 Feb 1685); and MS Tanner 308 ff 53v–54, 67–68v (Dee in Kassel). Arthur Dee's recollections are MS Ashmole 1788, fols. 151r-v, and printed in Josten, *Ashmole*, 4:1372 and in Geoffrey Keynes, ed., *The Works of Sir Thomas Browne*, 4 vols. (1928; London: Faber and Faber, 1964), 4:296-8.

Dee's *Compendious Rehearsal* was edited by James Crossley in *Autobiographical Tracts of Dr John Dee*, Manchester, 1851. The catalogue of Dee's library is preserved in Trinity College, Cambridge (TCC MS 0.4.2) and there is a copy in the British Library (Harleian MS 1879). The catalogue was edited by Julian Roberts and Andrew G. Watson, *John Dee's Library Catalogue*, London, 1990. Amongst manuscripts in the British Library are Henry Wotton's letter on Kelly's arrest (Lansdowne MS 68 no 85, f 192–5); the drafts of two letters from Burghley to Kelly, one undated (Lansdowne MS 103 no 73 f 211), and one of May 1591 (Lansdowne MS 103 no 72); Burghley to Dyer 12 May 1591 (MS Cotton Lib. Titus II); Kelly on Christopher Parkins June 1589 (Lansdowne MS 61 f 64); Dee to Burghley on seeking treasure (Lansdowne MS 19 art 38) and on Parkins (Lansdowne MS 61 art 58 f 159); [all these together with Burghley's letter on Dee's calendar reforms, and Thomas Webbe's instructions are published in John Strype, *Annals of the Reformation*, 4 volumes, Oxford, 1824]; Dee to Queen Elizabeth on the Armada (Harleian MS 6986 art 28) [in Henry Ellis, ed., *Original Letters of Eminent Literary Men of the 16th, 17th and 18th Centuries* (London, 1843), 45-46; Kelly to Burghley 18 February 1590/1 (Lansdowne MS 66 no 58 f 164–5); Thomas Webbe to Burghley 26 June 1591 (Lansdowne MS 68 no 93 ff 210–11); and information on Kelly's

knighthood (Lansdowne MS 846 ff 216–7).

The State papers preserved in the Public Record Office, Kew, include the letters from Dee on the *Stenographia*, 1563 (SP 12/27 f 63), to Walsingham 17 June 1587 (SP 15/30 f 64) and 20 August 1589 (SP 15/31 f 45) and to Young August 20 1589 (SP 15/31 f 35); Kelly to Burghley 24 July, 10 August and 31 October 1590 (SP 81/6 ff 56–7, 65, 76); Queen Elizabeth to Rudolf II (SP 80/1 f 133) and the Elector of Saxony (SP 81/7 f 31); Lord Burghley to Palavicino 8 March 1590 (SP 81/6 f 7–8); Pucci (SP 81/6 f 68ff); Thomas Page (SP 12/108 f 119); Christopher Parkins 12 March 1590 (SP 12/231 f 22), 18 July 1593 (SP 81/7 f 140) and 20 July 1593 (SP 81/7 f 143–4); Dyer to Burghley 31 October 1590 (SP 82/3 f 134); William Milwarde (SP 82/3 f 116); Robert Sidney (SP 84/42 f 68); Matthew Greensmith (SP 81/7 f 28); Thomas Bodley (SP 84/35 ff 27–8); Edward Suliarde (SP 85/1 f 158); Seth Cockes 28 July 1593 (SP 80/1 f 154), 9 December 1593 (SP 85/1 f 163) and 8 April 1595 (SP 88/1 f 221). Crown copyright material in the Public Record Office is reproduced by permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office: State Papers SP 80/1 ff 133; SP 81/6 ff 7–8; SP 81/7, ff 28, 31, 140, 143–4; SP 82/3 f 134; SP 84/42 f 68.

These items are transcribed in *Calendar of State Papers Domestic Series, of the Reigns of Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth, 1547–1580*, ed Robert Lemon, London, 1856; *Calendar of State Papers Domestic Series, Elizabeth and James I, Addenda 1580–1625*, ed Mary Ann Everett Green, London, 1872; *Calendar of State Papers Foreign Series, of the Reign of Elizabeth*, vol 21 part I, June 1586–June 1588, ed Sophie Crawford Lomas, London, 1927; *Calendar of State Papers Foreign Series of the Reign of Elizabeth*, vol 23, January–July 1589, ed Richard Bruce Wernham, London, 1950; *List and Analysis of State Papers Foreign Series Elizabeth I Preserved in the Public Record Office*, vol 1, August 1589–June 1590, vol 2, July 1590–May 1591, ed Richard Bruce Wernham, London, 1964, 1969.

Ashmole's story of Kelly's receiving the elixir, told him by William Backhouse, is in the Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 1790, fols. 60–1, printed in Josten 2:603–5, and the version told him by William Lilly is in MS Ashmole 421, fols. 220v–221, and published in William Lilly, *History of His Life and Times* (London, 1822), 225–6. on Arthur Dee, see Lyndy Abraham, ed, Arthur Dee, *Fasciculus chemicus*, trans Elias Ashmole, New York and London, 1997; Culpeper's and Lilly's accounts of experiments with Dee's crystal are reported in John Appleby, 'Arthur Dee and Johannes Bánfy Hunyades: Further Information on their Alchemical and Professional Activities,' *Ambix* 24 (1977) 96–109.

Information on Rudolf II's milieu is drawn from R.J. W. Evans, *Rudolf II and His World: A Study in Intellectual History*, Oxford, 1973; on Laski from Konstanty Zantuan, 'Olbracht Laski in Elizabethan England: an Episode in the History of Culture,' *Polish Review*, 13 iv (1968) 3–22; on Laski's visit to Oxford from *Holinshed's Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*, 6 vols. London, 1808, 4:507–8; on Stephen Báthory from Norman Davies, *God's Playground: A History of Poland, vol 1 The Origins to 1795*, Oxford, 1981; on Elizabeth Weston from Susan Bassnett, 'Revising a Biography: A new interpretation of the life of Elizabeth Jane Weston (Westonia), based on her autobiographical poems on the occasion of the death of her mother,' *Cahiers Elisabéthains*, 37 (Avril 1990) 1–8, and Elizabeth Jane Weston, *Collected Writings*. ed. Donald Cheney and Brenda M. Hosington, with the assistance of D. K. Money, Buffalo and London, 2000, xii, W. P. Phillimore, ed., *Oxford Parish Registers. Marriages, vol I*, London, 1909, 4, and Jack Howard-Drake, *Oxford Church Depositions 1542-1550*, Oxford, 1991, item 3; on 'Henry Fagot' as Bruno from John Bossy, *Giordano Bruno and the Embassy Affair*, New Haven and London, 1991, John Bossy, *Under the Molehill; an Elizabethan Spy Story*, New Haven and London, 2001; on Humphrey Gilbert's proposed American settlement from R. B. Merriman, 'Some Notes on the Treatment of the English Catholics in the Reign of Elizabeth,' *American Historical Review*, 13 (1907–8) 480–500; on the Hesketh conspiracy from *Historical Manuscripts Commission: Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Hon. The Marquis of Salisbury, K. G., &c. &c. &c. preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire*, part IV, London, 1892, Charles Nicholl, *A Cup of News: The Life of Thomas Nash*, London, 1984, and Benjamin Woolley, *The Queen's Conjuror: The Science and Magic of Dr Dee*, London, 2000; on Czech sources from Václav Kaplický's novel about Kelly, *Život Alchymistův*, Prague, 1980, Vladimír Karpenko, 'Bohemian Nobility and Alchemy in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century: Wilhelm of Rosenberg and Two Alchemists,' *Cauda Pavonis*, 15 ii (1996) 14–18, Ivan Sviták, 'John Dee and Edward Kelley,' *Kosmas [The Journal of Czechslovak and Central European Studies]*, 5 (1986) 125–38, and Sviták, *Kouzelník z Londyna: John Dee v Cechách, 1584-1598*, Prague, 1994, and Sviták, *Sir Edward Kelley: český rytíř, 1555-1598*, Prague 1994, and Angelo Maria Ripellino, *Magic Prague*, trans David Newton Marinelli, ed Michael Henry Heim, London, 1994, which in turn

draws on Josef Svátek, “Anglický alchymista Kelley v Cechách” and “Alchymie v Cechách za doby Rudolfa II” in *Obrazy z kulturních dějin českých*, vol 1, 142-7 and vol 2, 48-5, Prague, 1891; on Kelly’s wooden leg, Wien, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Reichshofrat, Gratia et Feudalia, Patentes und Steckbriefe Faszikel 1 (A-F), unfol, Chlaus – cited in www.documenta.rudolphina.org; on Rudolf’s reply to the Elector of Brandenburg, Wien, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Reichshofrat, Judicialia, Alte Prages Akten, Karton 90, Kylei; Sir Richard Bingham’s letter, Universitätsbibliothek Kassel – Landesbibliothek und Murhardsche Bibliothek der Stadt Kassel, 4° Ms. chem. 67, 141v – 143v.

Bibliography

- Abraham, Lyndy, *A Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery*, Cambridge, 1998
- Adams, Robyn, “‘The Service I am Here for’: William Herle in the Marshalsea Prison, 1571,” *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 72, 2, (2009) 217-38
- Ashmole, Elias ed, *Theatrum chemicum Britannicum*, London, 1652
- Aubrey, John, *Brief Lives*, ed A. Clark, Oxford, 1898
- Bacon, Francis, *The Works of Francis Bacon*, ed Basil Montague, 3 vols., London, 1823
- Baker, Sir Richard, *A Chronicle of the Kings of England*, London, 1665
- Beckingsale, B. W., *Burghley: Tudor Statesman 1520–1598*, London and New York, 1967
- Binns, J. W., *Intellectual Culture in Elizabethan and Jacobean England: The Latin Writings of the Age*, Leeds, 1990
- Brooks, Eric St John, *Sir Christopher Hatton*, London, 1956
- Bright, Curtis, *Surveillance, Militarism and Drama in the Elizabethan Era*, London and New York, 1996
- Bridges, Vincent, with added material by Eliska Bridges and Terry Burns, *An Alchemical Enigma: A Short History of the Rise and Fall of Sir Edward Kelley*, 2018
- Brumbaugh, Robert S., ‘The Voynich “Roger Bacon” Cipher Manuscript: Deciphered Maps of Stars,’ *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 39 (1976) 139–50
- Burns, Teresa, ‘A Golden Storm: Attempting to Recreate the Context of John Dee and Edward Kelley’s Angelic Material,’ *Journal of the Western Mystery Tradition*, 2, 19 (2010)
- Camden, William, *The History of Elizabeth*, vol 3, London 1675

Clulee, Nicholas H., *John Dee's Natural Philosophy: Between Science and Religion*, London and New York, 1988

Cóil, Liam Mac, 'Kelly of Imamyi.' *London Review of Books*, 23, 10, (May 24, 2001) 4

Cooper, John, *The Queen's Agent: Francis Walsingham at the Court of Elizabeth I*, London, 2011

Coote, Stephen, *A Play of Passion: The Life of Sir Walter Raleigh*, London, 1993

Deacon, Richard, *John Dee: Scientist Geographer, Astrologer and Secret Agent to Elizabeth I*, London, 1968

Dee, John, *Monas Hieroglyphica*, ed and trans C. H. Josten, *Ambix*, 12 (1964) 84–221

Digges, Thomas, *Alae seu scalae mathematicae*, London, 1573

D'Israeli, Isaac, 'The Occult Philosopher, Dr Dee,' *Amenities of Literature*, London, 1840

Ernst, Thomas, 'Schwarzweisse Magie. Der Schlüssel zum dritten Buch der Steganographia des Trithemius,' *Daphnis*, 25, 1 (1996)

Fell Smith, Charlotte, *John Dee 1527–1608*, London, 1909

Ferne, John, *The Blazon of Gentry*, London, 1586

Figuier, Louis, *L'Alchimie et les Alchimistes*, Paris, 1860

French, Peter J., *John Dee: The World of an Elizabethan Magus*, London, 1972

The Fugger News-Letters, ed Victor von Klarwill, first series, London, 1924, second series, London, 1926

Gristwood, Sarah, *Elizabeth and Essex: Power, Passion, Politics*, London, 2007

Haynes, Alan, *Invisible Power; The Elizabethan Secret Service 1570–1603*, Stroud, 1992

Haynes, Alan, *Walsingham: Elizabethan Spymaster and Statesman*, Stroud, 2004

Hooke, Robert, *The Posthumous Works*, London, 1705

Hakluyt, Richard, *Principal Navigations*, vol 3, Glasgow, 1903

Harkness, Deborah E., "Shows in the Showstone: A Theatre of Alchemy and Apocalypse in the Angel Conversations of John Dee (1527-1608/9)," *Renaissance Quarterly* 49 (1996) 707-37

Harkness, Deborah, *John Dee's Conversations with Angels: Cabala, Alchemy and the End of Nature*, Cambridge, 2000)

Harvey, Gabriel, *Pierces Supererogation*, London, 1593

Hutchinson, Robert, *Elizabeth's Spy Master: Francis Walsingham and the Secret War that Saved England*, London, 2006

Icely, H. E. M., *Blockley Through Twelve Centuries*, Aldburgh, 1988

James, ed, Geoffrey, *The Enochian Magic of Dr John Dee*, St Paul, 1984

Josten, C. H., ed, *Elias Ashmole 1617–1692: His Autobiographical and Historical Notes, His Correspondence and other Contemporary Sources Relating to his Life and Work*, 5 vols., Oxford, 1968

Karpenko, Vladimír, and Purš, Ivo, ‘Edward Kelly: A Star of the Rudolfine Era,’ in Ivo Purš and Vladimír Karpenko, *Alchemy and Rudolf II: Exploring the Secrets of Nature in Central Europe in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, Prague, 2016

Kelly, Edward, *Tractatus Duo Egregii, De Lapide Philosophorum, una cum Theatro Astronomiae Terrestri*, Hamburg, 1676

Kelly, Edward, *Two Excellent Treatises on the Philosopher’s Stone together with the Theatre of Terrestrial Astronomy*, ed and trans A. E. Waite, London, 1893

Laycock, Donald C., *The Complete Enochian Dictionary: A Dictionary of the Angelic Language as Revealed to Dr John Dee and Edward Kelley*, York Beach, 1978

Lenglet du Fresnoy, Nicolas, *Histoire de la Philosophie Hermétique*, 3 vols., Paris, 1742: facsimile reprint Hildesheim and New York, 1975

Lilly, William, *The Lives of those Eminent Antiquaries Elias Ashmole and Mr William Lilly*, London, 1774

Lindsay, Jack, *Adam of a New World*, London, 1936

McNulty, Robert, ‘Bruno at Oxford,’ *Renaissance News*, 13 (1960) 300–5

Moffet, Thomas, *Nobilis, or View of the Life and Death of a Sidney*, ed and trans Virgil B. Heltsel and Hoyt H. Hudson, San Marino, 1940

Moran, Bruce T., *The Alchemical World of the German Court: Occult Philosophy and Chemical Medicine in the Circle of Moritz of Hessen*, Stuttgart, 1991

Nash, Thomas, *Works*, ed Ronald B. McKerrow, 5 vols., London, 1904–40

Nash, T. R., *History and Antiquities of Worcestershire*, 2 vols., London, 1781

Nicholl, Charles, *The Reckoning: The Murder of Christopher Marlowe*, London, 1992

Plowden, Alison, *The Elizabethan Secret Service*, Hemel Hempstead, 1991

Phillips, Graham and Keatman, Martin, *The Shakespeare Conspiracy*, London, 1994

Pucci, Francesco, *Lettere, documenti et testimonianze*, ed L. Firpo and R. Piattoli, 2 vols., Florence, 1955–9

Reed, Conyers, *Mr Secretary Walsingham and the Policy of Queen Elizabeth*, 3 vols., Cambridge, Mass., 1925

Reeds, Jim, ‘Solved: The Ciphers in Book III of Trithemius’ *Steganographia*,’ *Cryptologia*, 22, 4 (1998)

Sargent, Ralph M., *At the Court of Queen Elizabeth: The Life and Lyrics of Sir Edward Dyer*,

London and New York, 1935

Sherman, William, *John Dee; The Politics of Reading and Writing in the English Renaissance*, Amherst, 1995

Shumaker, Wayne, *Renaissance Curiosa*, Binghamton, N.Y., 1982

Smith, Logan Pearsall, ed, *The Life and Letters of Sir Henry Wotton*, 2 vols., Oxford, 1907

Stone, Lawrence, *An Elizabethan: Sir Horatio Palavicino*, Oxford, 1956

Strype, John, *Annals of the Reformation*, 4 vols., Oxford, 1824

Suster, Gerald, ed, *John Dee: Essential Readings*, Wellingborough, 1996

Svátek, Josef, *The Memoirs of a Prague Executioner* (1905), translated by Mirek Katzl, Palm Harbor, Florida, 2008

Tait, Hugh, “‘The Devil’s Looking-Glass’: The Magical Speculum of Dr John Dee,” in Warren Hunting Smith, ed, *Horace Walpole: Writer, Politician, Connoisseur*, New Haven and London, 1967

Trevelyan, Raleigh, *Sir Walter Raleigh*, London, 2003

Turner, Robert, ed, *The Heptarchia Mystica of John Dee*, Wellingborough, 1986

Turner, Robert, *Elizabethan Magic*, Shaftesbury, 1989

van Lennep, Jacques, *Alchimie: Contribution à l’histoire de Part alchimique*, Brussels, 1985

Waugh, Evelyn, *Edmund Campion*, London, 1935

Weever, John, *Ancient Funerall Monuments*, London, 1631

Whitby, Christopher Lionel, ‘John Dee and Renaissance Scrying’, *Bulletin of the Society of Renaissance Studies*, 3 (1985) 25–35

Wilding, Michael, ‘Edward Kelly: A Life,’ *Cauda Pavonis*, n.s. 18, no. 1 & 2 (1999) 1-26; reprinted, revised, in Stanton J. Linden, ed., *'Mystical Metal of Gold:' Essays on Alchemy and Renaissance Culture*, New York, 2007, 35-89

West, Morris, *The Last Confession*, Sydney, 2000

Wood, Anthony à, *Athenae Oxoniensis*, London, 1721

Yates, Frances, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, London, 1964

Yates, Frances, *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age*, London, 1979